Commentary

Volume Fifty-eight, Number Two, August 1974

Lawyers at the Bar
Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.

Stefa and Pomeranz—A Story
Amos Oz

Culture and the Abyss
Samuel Hux

The Gathering Storm

WALTER LAQUEUR

Notes on American Innocence
Lev Navrozov

Exchanges:
The Press/ Nuclear Strategy/ Anti-Semitism

On Leo Strauss
Milton Himmelfarb

Books in Review:
Nathan Glazer/Alan Mintz
John W. Aldridge/ William J. Bennett
Jacob Katz/Rudolf Klein
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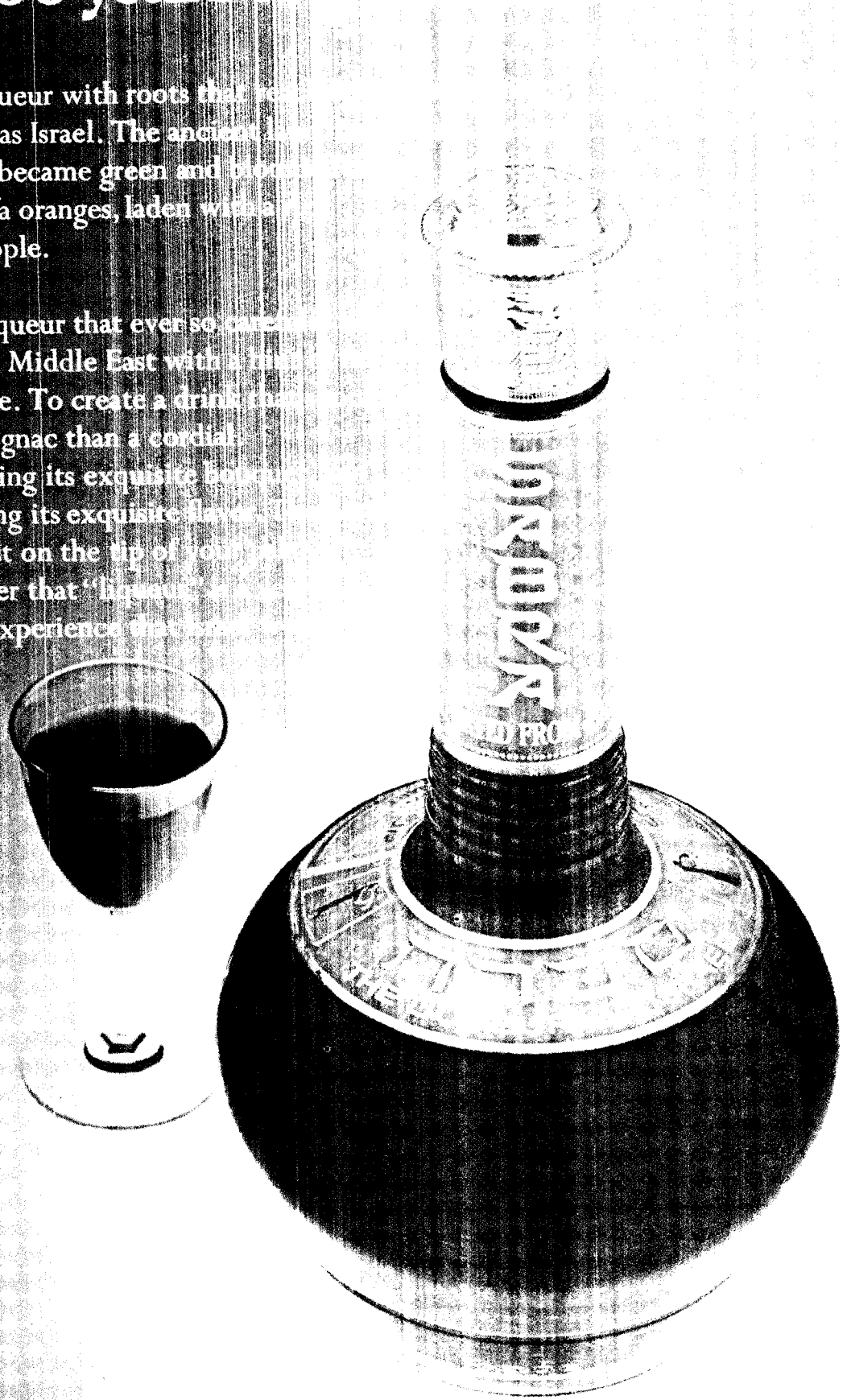

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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

The Role of the Press

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward Jay Epstein's article, "Journalism and Truth" [April], which will be read by the predisposed as proof that journalists are inherently unable to be truthful, opens more speculations than it closes. . . .

If not the present system of truthlessness, what will take its place? Since both the Mob and Mammon feel a certain need for the system as it now stands—its bulk, its timeliness, its variety of inclusion, and even its immensity of exclusion—deconditioning them will be a difficult process. It will be even more difficult without a clearly realized substitute, some well-organized way to fool the neural responses that are now masked as a hunger to know what's going on. . . .

Academics have lately turned to journalism in fierce numbers. They used to think they could govern us better than our governors, but when they got their chance their greatest achievement was to provide the raw material for David Halberstam's book. This had not been their aim, so, as a class, they turned on news. Command of the media, a word they singularized, might give them the means for social engineering they had so badly booted in Washington. Their first step was to analyze the weak link, the journalist with his feeble and unworthy claim that he had no conscious desire to change things, no wealth to garner except from being better paid, no power to achieve. As badly as he did his job, he seemed to think he could do it better than others because he liked his work. And it is true, once you consider the power for evil of such work, that that seems small enough reason for practicing it. Better to seek out men who know the truth, and how to find it, and what to do with it.

Newsmen, says Mr. Epstein, are not themselves inadequate, but they work under the limitations of "time, space, and resources that can be allotted to any single story." His alternative, when he comes to offer it clearly, will provide unlimited time, space, and, resources. . . .

But the journalists, whose inadequacies did not in paragraph one create the divergence between news and truth, in paragraph three "lack forensic means and authority to establish the truth about a matter in serious dispute." Here Mr. Epstein raises not only problems with his methods, but problems with his solution. His solution—although he does not really state it—seems to be to engage the expertise of recognized practitioners within the relevant bodies of discipline, certified as experts by their professional organizations, and subject to the supervision of expert peers. (". . . The process of review by other scholars in the field through which, presumably, objections to the thesis are articulated and errors corrected." *Vide supra.*)

Rather than belabor the obvious, let me give an example. Take any newspaper from any recent day. Mark any story where action of some kind has followed, or seems likely to follow, from the fact that it was or is being reported. Then establish a timetable of steps which would necessarily precede such action if its reporting were to be formulated as a doctoral dissertation. Or the life work of some scholar. Or a study accorded unlimited time, space, and resources, which would take even longer than either of those.

Clearly, Mr. Epstein doesn't mean that. But what does he mean? If his clearly-stated purpose were his real one, his article would not have been worth writing. . . . The total truth is not present in every news story. Of course not. You could hold a circulation contest with prizes for the reader deriving the most *reductiones ad absurdum* from the concept that each news story must show the derivation of the event from the Creation, and its ramifications to the far Philippines. And if that is not what Mr. Epstein means by truth, what is? Will historians judge the *Times* version of what the Pentagon Papers said and meant as truer or less true than the academic version he cites? What would Watergate be without Woodward and Bernstein, and their irrational persistence? Granted that they persisted mostly in seeking who would leak and caring little why. Would truth have been served if they hadn't?

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Even were one to accept Mr. Epstein's entire thesis, I see nothing accomplished in stating it. It rests on this flimsy base: Newsmen now almost invariably depict themselves not merely as reporters of the fragments of information that come their way, but as active pursuers of the truth. Mr. Epstein must have just come from an awards luncheon when he wrote that. Or somebody had been showing off for him. The newsmen I know don't depict themselves as active pursuers of the truth. At least not to me. . . .

Besides which, I submit that any sentence which begins, "Newsmen now almost invariably depict themselves . . ." is *ipse dixit* nonsense. But without this sentence the piece is pointless. Mr. Epstein is warning his readers that newsmen are not what they almost invariably depict themselves to be. He identifies for journalists their dilemma, that either they must uncritically use leaks from a materially interested source, or do their best with the leaks by discounting the interest, matching it with other leaks, and similar examples of their skill and guile. But if they do that, they might make mistakes, since journalists, apparently uniquely, don't know everything. Mr. Epstein's solution to the dilemma is to identify the source of a leak, at least as to its interest, and then lay it down uncritically. That is a small conclusion for so much argument. But it is also the wrong conclusion. It would make for dumb news and lousy newspapers.

REUVEN FRANK

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his essay on "Journalism and Truth," Edward Jay Epstein displays a deplorable lack of understanding of the practice commonly referred to as "investigative reporting." His ignorance is perhaps not surprising, for experience has taught me that many conventional journalists themselves fail to comprehend the demanding disciplines that govern the conduct of the professional journalist-investigator.

It is ironic, however, that one who expresses such concern over the alleged failure of reporters to measure up to standards of scholarly research should himself report a distorted version of the truth. Mr. Epstein mentions, without any qualifications whatsoever, "the well-timed leaks to the press by elements in the Nixon administration which ultimately forced Justice Abe Fortas from the Supreme Court. . . ."

As a professional who has spent much of a twenty-eight-year career in journalism as an investigative reporter, and who researched and wrote the original article on Justice Fortas to which Mr. Epstein refers, I suggest that for an accurate account of the painstaking effort that went into establishing the truth of my story (which appeared in *Life*) he read Robert Shogan's excellent book on the Fortas case, *A Question of Judgment*. My original disclosures, which stemmed from a tip—a mere fragment of information—from just such a government source as Mr. Epstein describes, were not "leaked" as a package by anyone for any particular partisan polit-

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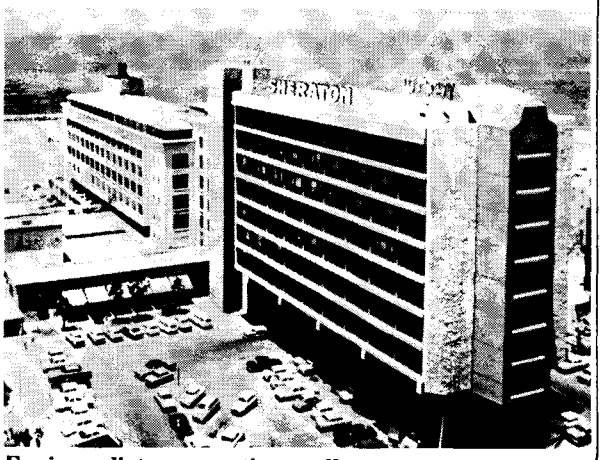

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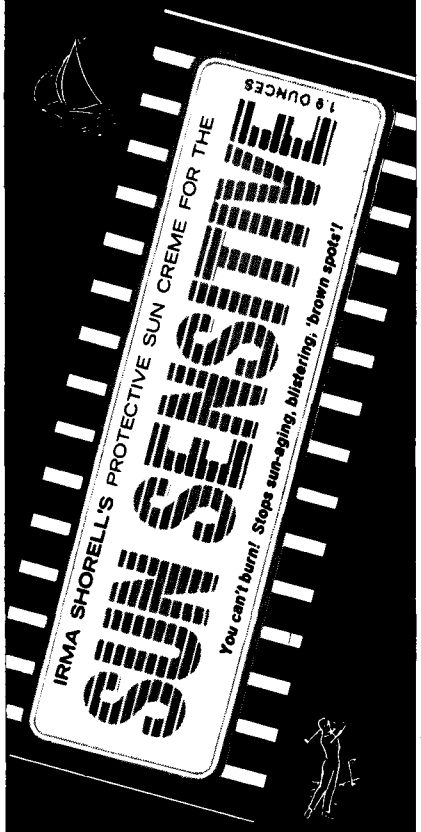

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ical purpose. The lead came from a career federal employee late in October 1968, before Nixon was elected to the Presidency, and a report of my ongoing investigation was communicated directly to Justice Fortas in November (a fact of which I was unaware until I read Shogan's book) by no less an authority than Ramsey Clark, then serving as President Johnson's Attorney General.

Paul Porter, who had been a law partner of Fortas before the latter's appointment to the bench, confirmed the essential facts of my story as early as December 1968, when I interviewed him in his Washington office. However, considerable additional research was needed for me to establish whether a causal relationship existed between Justice Fortas's financial dealings with Louis Wolfson and Wolfson's troubles at that time with the Securities and Exchange Commission and the office of U.S. Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau. I spent the better part of five months working on that story, examining and re-examining facts as I assembled them—all in the search for "truth."

But "truth," as Mr. Epstein must admit, is often an elusive quality. It resists precise definition. In the sense that it reflects reality, it is a noble goal sought by all good journalists and historians and lawyers—and even, one hopes, essayists specializing in press criticism. That it is *difficult* to attain does not mean that it is *impossible* of attainment. The truth of my disclosures in the *Life* article has never been disputed publicly by Mr. Fortas, although Mr. Wolfson bombards almost anyone who will listen with a lengthy litany of my alleged irresponsibilities. My account of the relationship between the two was not complete because, as Mr. Epstein rightly points out, journalists are not favored with such means as compulsory process to obtain information. But it was accurate and realistic. The full story of the lifetime contract between the Wolfson Foundation and Fortas, which surfaced later in the daily press, reinforced my original disclosures.

I have no doubt that the story of that contract came from some government agency *after* the Nixon Justice Department began investigating the Fortas affair. But I am reasonably confident that had I not received that original tip and investigated the matter, the Fortas-Wolfson relationship with all its implications would never have come to light. Top officials of the Nixon Justice Department had no knowledge of it at all until they learned of my independent investigation. (Apparently Ramsey Clark had not passed along what he knew of it to his successor, John Mitchell.) Moreover, I was extremely displeased when I discovered that the Nixon administration knew of my investigation. The subject matter obviously was delicate, and the last thing I wanted was to produce a story tainted, however undeservedly, by any hint of partisan politics.

I agree with Mr. Epstein that many of the news stories growing out of Watergate stemmed from deliberate leaks, and were passed off as "investigative." The only genuine investigative reporting on the Watergate affair was accomplished in the early stages of the scandal, before the self-servers began to unload their tidbits. Surely by any reasonable standard, the work of Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward of the Washington *Post* in those early months was investigative, dependent to a very limited extent, if any, on leaks from official investigators.

However, it should be pointed out that Watergate was not a typical investigative story; it was, rather, a "running" daily story, and the competitive rush to print unfortunately and inevitably produced some erroneous reports. The typical investigative story is one that ordinarily would never be revealed; one that some wrongdoer hopes can be concealed; and one that, when discovered by a reporter, is quietly and meticulously researched, documented where possible, and in every case has all of its substantive facts corroborated in some fashion or another. No single-source news story is ever entitled to the honorific, "investigative."

Often, of course, tangible documentation to substantiate a story is unavailable, and the reporter must then rely on testimonial evidence. I could cite many examples, but one of my favorites is Seymour Hersh's disclosures of the Mylai massacre. His stories originated in a tip from a source whose information proved in large part inaccurate, but Hersh corrected those errors during a four-month investigation, in which he interviewed about forty members of Lieutenant Calley's infantry

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company. Does anyone really believe that his five stories revealing that ignominious episode were less than truthful?

Mr. Epstein also expresses the novel notion that the motivation of the source of the tip or leak is a necessary element in the "truth" of a story. Source motivation, it seems to me, is irrelevant. If thorough research and independent corroboration substantiate the original lead to the story, and the resultant product is accurate and soundly evaluated, of what moment is the original tipster's motivation? Who cares whether the lead came from a disgruntled bureaucrat, a self-serving politician, or an anonymous phone caller?

Further, Mr. Epstein makes the bald assertion that ". . . journalists generally lack the technical competence to evaluate evidence with any authority. . . ." I submit that professional investigative reporters, a relatively small but well-trained lot, are not empty-headed information collectors. They are familiar with the rules of evidence and the disciplines that govern scholarly research. When they need additional expertise, they seek it from those who can provide it impartially.

I have doubts that I can convince Mr. Epstein, whose rather harsh judgments about journalists and their practices seem to be embedded in concrete, but most investigative reporters worthy of the designation do indeed search for truth, not just random facts.

WILLIAM LAMBERT
Rye, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward Jay Epstein is right to emphasize the limits to what journalists can find out, but he oversimplifies when he suggests that journalists merely report what official and unofficial "sources" choose to tell them. There is a good deal more to it than that.

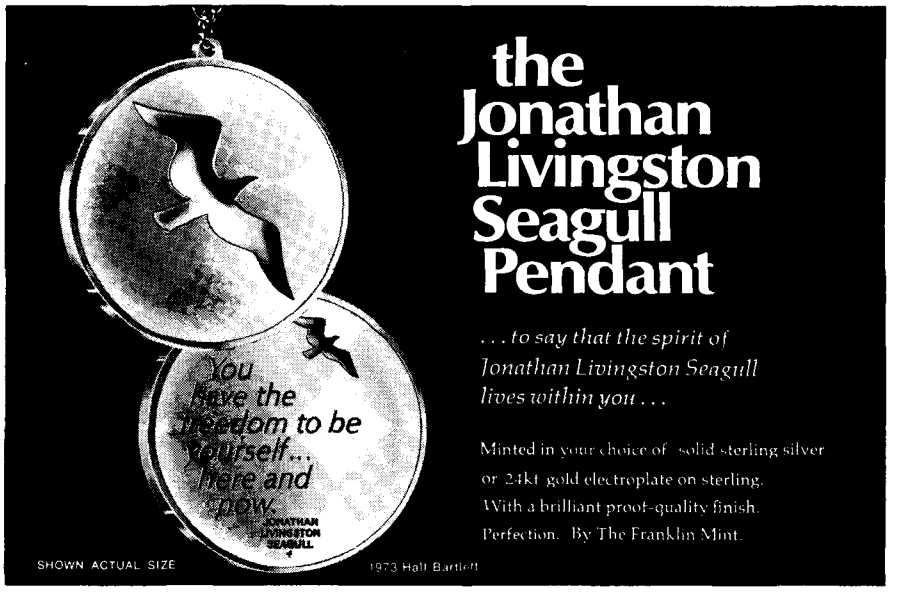
In writing some stories, of course, journalists are only a sort of middleman between the source and the public, passing on information, sometimes true and sometimes not, which has been handed to them in a take-it-or-leave-it package. Jack Anderson's report of Eagleton's alleged record of drunken driving, cited by Mr. Epstein, is a good example of this. . . .

The most important stories, however, contain more than a single nugget of fact and the information comes not only from willing informants, who may have their own purposes, but also from people who do not know they are providing it or who are providing it against their will. Even when information comes from a willing source its bias is not necessarily hidden, and, where hidden, it may be irrelevant. The motive of the IRS employee who leaked Nixon's tax returns may have been high or low or beyond human comprehension; it doesn't really color the nature of what he was handing over. The motive of the man who first revealed the secret bombing of Cambodia did not cast doubt on the truth of his report; quite the contrary. Ellsberg's motives were mixed and complex but of secondary interest and importance to the Pentagon Papers themselves. The important thing, it seems to me, is not the bias of the informant but his veracity.

Mr. Epstein cites the reports of Eagleton's medical history and mentions that copies of them were found in John Ehrlichman's safe. If he means to suggest that journalists (or Jaworski) ought to look into how they got there, I certainly agree. But if he means to imply that Eagleton's medical history is somehow irrelevant because it was made public by Ehrlichman, then I find his position curious to say the least.

Mr. Epstein suggests that the proper model for "truth-seeking" is the law, with its powers of subpoena, compulsion, and punishment, but I wonder if lawyers would agree. The purpose of legal process, after all, is the establishment of legal guilt or innocence, something a good deal narrower than "truth." The guilty sometimes get off and the innocent sometimes go to jail. In his Watergate troubles Nixon has sometimes tried to suggest that even though he may be "technically" guilty of wrongdoing, he is not "really" guilty. This is not a distinction without a difference and it suggests the limits of the law where truth is concerned.

What journalists do is actually closer to the practice of history, I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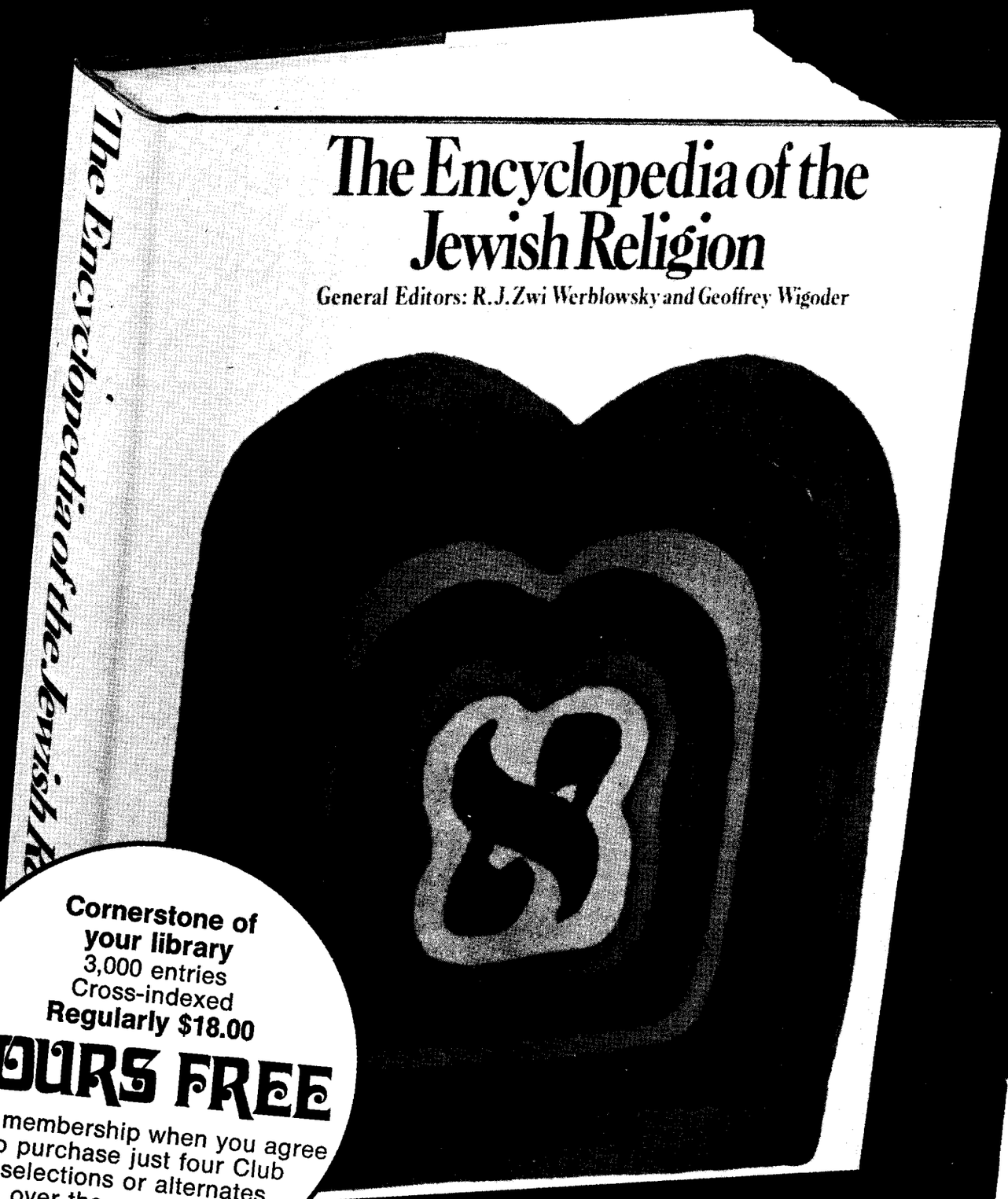
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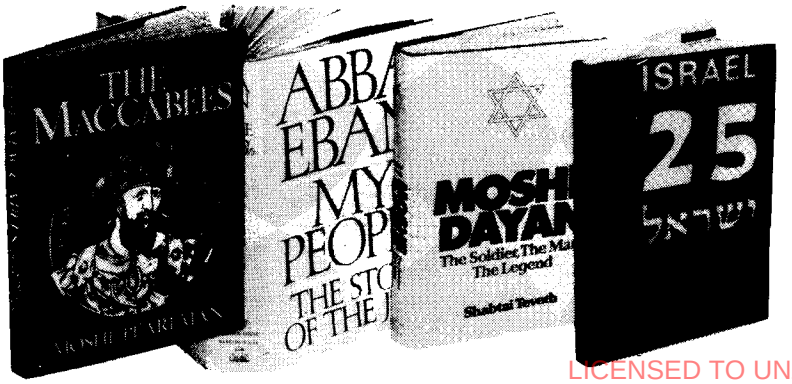

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think, than to the law. They use the same sort of evidence in much the same way to establish a similar sort of truth. It might be difficult to prove in a legal way that Stalin was responsible for the purges of the 1930's and yet it is so. The lack of legal proof is less important than the presence of other sorts of evidence which allow historians to determine what really happened. This is the sort of truth which journalists attempt to establish. The difficulty, of course, is that journalists see only a small part of the total record eventually available to historians.

Journalists cannot compel testimony and their cross-examination does not have the weight of the law behind it, but that does not mean they must accept everything they are told humbly and at face value. Far from it. If journalists are not by nature skeptical they soon learn to be so; they are constantly approached with information tainted by the obvious bias of the informant. If they accepted it all blindly their careers would be short indeed. . . .

Every City Hall reporter is slipped a dozen inside stories a week. Congressional reporters all but stagger under their load of unreported scandal, malfeasance, and outright criminality. My point is that far from being overtrusting of unofficial stories, journalists often err by being too skeptical, coldly and even rudely rejecting information of genuine value because it seems tainted by spleen, or because they have heard the story too often before, or because they are tired and want to go home.

Writing good journalism is not easy but Mr. Epstein describes it as being hard in the wrong way. In a sense he has simply inverted the real problem, which is that journalists are far too dependent on official sources, too indifferent to reports of official failure and wrongdoing, and too accustomed, after a time, to things as they are. Police reporters do not often uncover police graft, just as White House reporters do not often uncover White House scandals. The problem, in short, is not an overeager and irresponsible willingness to take rumor-mongers at face value, but a kind of unconscious collusion with those in authority, whose interest in truth is, if anything, even feebler than that of journalists.

THOMAS POWERS

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward Jay Epstein underestimates the part played by the predispositions of newsmen in making current news reporting fall as far short of the truth as it does. It is true, as he says, that "plausibility" is an unsatisfactory criterion for reporters to apply to stories they are given, because liars can always shape their stories to the prejudices of those they tell them to. But consistency in slant suggests a willingness to be deceived.

It seems significant to me that the four stories cited by Mr. Epstein which were published and later proved to be false all reflect a willingness on the part of reporters and editors to accept without much question the malignity of U.S. government officials and of anyone in opposition to a self-styled socialist government (outside the USSR and its East European allies). Clearly it is easier to credit stories about an organized genocidal campaign against Black Panthers, a White House plan to assassinate Panama's head of government, a private order by Henry Kissinger to "tilt" toward Pakistan while publicly proclaiming neutrality, or the brutal murder of Chilean workers in the coup that overthrew the Allende government, if you believe that local police forces are not only racist but murderous, that U.S. foreign policy is not only dishonest but base, and that the opposition to any government calling itself socialist (with the exceptions noted above) is bound to be vicious. And it is easier to accept substantial editing of the Pentagon Papers for publication in the New York *Times* as merely contributing "artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative" if you are convinced that the edited version tells the essential truth.

Perhaps it is because, as Mr. Epstein reminds us, modern newsmen have more formal education . . . than their predecessors that they are less able to apply the test of plausibility. Old-time newsmen, who were not educated in the conventional critical attitude toward the Establishment, . . . questioned the reliability of critics of the Establishment as well.

CICELY A. RYSHPAN

New York City

EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN writes:

Since Reuven Frank seems to have confused the argument I made in "Journalism and Truth," let me briefly restate it. Journalists rarely have the time, space, or budget to seek more than fragmentary bits of information about events, but even if they were not so constrained, and had limitless time, space, and money, they could not be expected to establish the truth for society because they lack an accepted procedure for eliciting information, testing evidence, and dealing with objections to a thesis. There is thus a very crucial difference between news and truth. Mr. Frank should have no problem accepting this difference, since as executive producer of the NBC Huntley-Brinkley news, he prescribed in a memorandum a set of formulas and rules for presenting the news, and noted: "Every news story should, without any sacrifice of probity or responsibility, display the attributes of fiction, of drama. It should have structure and conflict, problem and denouement, rising action and falling action." These are obviously not necessarily the attributes of history or other forms of systematic inquiry (or even of human experience).

Mr. Frank then asks what alternatives there are to journalism. I would recommend that anyone seriously interested in establishing the truth about controversial events turn to other institutions of organized intelligence which have commonly accepted procedures for evaluating evidence, such as universities, national commissions, grand juries, criminal courts, courts of inquiry, Congressional committees, and private study groups. Granted these institutions may be imperfect or faulty, but if strengthened, such non-journalistic institutions have the means of establishing evidence.

In asking, "What would Watergate be without Woodward and Bernstein?" Mr. Frank illustrates the journalistic blind spot toward all other fact-finding institutions in society which I discussed in these pages last month ["Did the Press Uncover Watergate?"]. The public learned of the planning of the Watergate break-in, the execution of these plans, and the subsequent perjury, cover-up, and obstruction of justice not through Woodward and Bernstein but through the televised hearings of the Senate Select Committee (and subsequently from the House Judiciary Committee and Special Prosecutor's office). During these hearings, Magruder,

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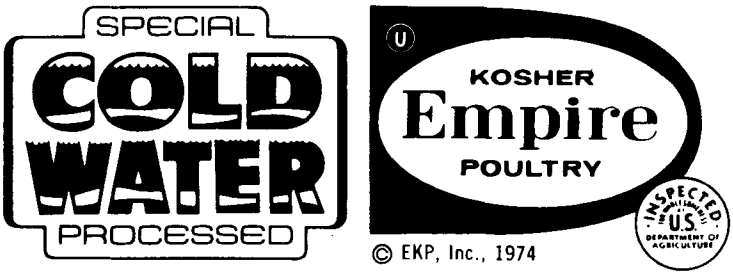

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Mardian, Dean, Mitchell, and other protagonists sketched out the genesis of Watergate (though there was disagreement on who approved of what) and the perjury in the trial of the Watergate burglars (as well as the "enemy list," the Ellsberg break-in, the 1970 intelligence plan, etc.). How did the Senate Select Committee come to know of this conspiracy? Again, it was not Woodward and Bernstein, or any other journalist, but John Dean, James McCord, and Jeb Stuart Magruder who told federal prosecutors the plot in the course of bargaining for immunity or less severe sentences. They were compelled to do this not by vigilant journalists, but by a vigilant judge, who levied heavy sentences on those convicted of the break-in. How did the judge know about the break-in? Again, it was not through the efforts of journalists, but because the Washington police caught the burglars—including an official of the Committee for the Re-election of the President—red-handed in Watergate; the FBI traced the money immediately to the Committee for the Re-election of the President (and Liddy), and one of the conspirators, Alfred Baldwin, came forward and told federal prosecutors all the details of Watergate (including the transcripts and prior break-in) a few days after the break-in. This information was then presented to a grand jury (it still had not leaked out to the press), and after that was presented in open trial. To be sure, the Washington *Post* leaked various parts of the investigation to the public, but they weren't the only institution doing it: the Democratic party filed a multimillion-dollar law suit over Watergate, and Senator McGovern rarely missed an opportunity to suggest that the White House was behind Watergate (though the vigilant press didn't always report his charges in full).

William Lambert also raises an interesting point when he discusses his own experiences in "exposing" Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas. Mr. Lambert certainly wasn't working under any deadline pressure in searching out a "causal relationship" between the acceptance of money by Fortas from a foundation controlled by financier Louis Wolfson and Wolfson's treatment by the court for the offense of selling unregistered stock. Yet he was never able to establish such a nexus—Fortas disqualified himself from any of the proceedings involving Wolfson. To be sure, by dredging up what seemed to be unexemplary conduct on the part of a Supreme Court judge, he assisted in an unofficial impeachment (by the press). He cannot comprehend that there were members of the Nixon administration who strongly desired to replace Fortas with a Nixon appointee (Nixon and Senator Griffin, interestingly enough, were campaigning for this just about the time Mr. Lambert received his tip from a government employee).

Mr. Lambert, illustrating the working ethic of journalism, notes: "Source motivation . . . is irrelevant." But is it? Subsequently, Charles Colson showed Mr. Lambert a forged cablegram which implicated President Kennedy in the assassination of Diem. To his (or his editors') credit, he never developed a story on this "leak"; but NBC News, when it was offered the bait, by Colonel Lucien Conein, presented this allegation as part of a nationally-televised documentary on the causes of the Vietnam war. In this case, I think both Mr. Lambert and Mr. Frank would admit that "source-motivation" was not irrelevant.

Finally, Mr. Lambert argues that not all investigative journalism proves false—and cites the excellent example of Seymour Hersh (who was not at the time working for a newspaper). I agree journalists can find truth. Astrologists can also predict events that at times occur, but this hardly proves that their procedures are reliable.

Nuclear Strategy

To the Editor of Commentary:

The arguments presented in "Nuclear Strategy: The New Debate" [April] are weakened by the same sorts of errors for which the author, Edward N. Luttwak, criticizes earlier U.S. decisions on nuclear strategy. The article oversimplifies the intricate psychological, political, military, and technical factors which must be considered in determining the most appropriate number and characteristics of strategic nuclear weapons. While a point-by-point critique undoubtedly would be too lengthy to go into here, a few of the more important misperceptions recorded in the article should not be left uncorrected.

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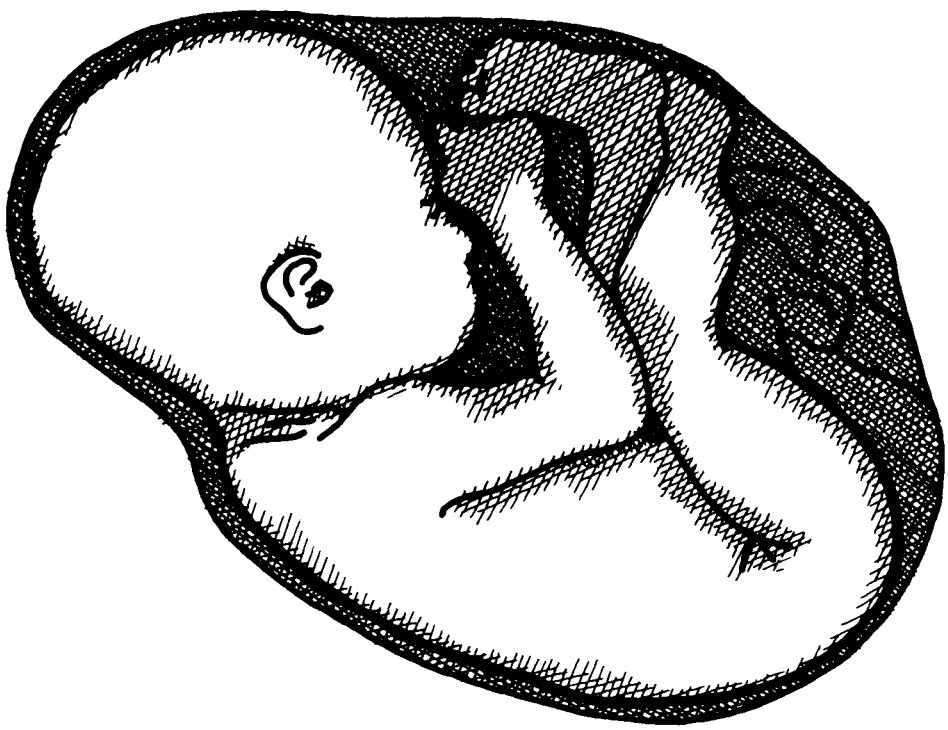

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First is Mr. Luttwak's implicit evaluation of the 1972 Strategic Arms Limitation Agreements and relative U.S.-USSR nuclear capabilities. Both these points are related to the question of how one goes about measuring strategic power. Mr. Luttwak finds the Interim Agreement on Limiting Strategic Offensive Arms deficient in that it gave the Soviet Union an advantage in the number of missile launchers permitted to each side. Unfortunately, the number of missile launchers is not a particularly good index of strategic capabilities; in fact, it is one of the poorest. Not only does it ignore the contribution of long-range bombers, an important component of the U.S. force, but it also ignores differences in the performance characteristics of the missile's accuracy, its reliability, its payload capacity, and so forth. In the case of the Interim SALT agreement, which expires automatically in 1977, the U.S. government reached the decision that during the lifetime of the agreement the Soviet Union would not be able to exceed U.S. nuclear capabilities, as indexed by more accurate measures of strategic power, despite the USSR's advantage in number of launchers.

This key assessment so far has proved to be totally accurate. While the USSR has flight-tested multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRV's) during the past year, an important step, this occurred far later, not earlier, than was expected. Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger has noted consistently that the pace of the Soviet research and development program is not at all surprising. Indeed, the USSR continues to surprise U.S. planners by the slowness of its technological advance in key areas—like missile accuracy. Somehow, in view of these other deficiencies, one doubts that supposedly "hard-headed" decisionmakers in the Soviet Union will be as much impressed by their advantage in missile launchers, as are political (and academic) figures in the United States. And if this is the case, then the "political advantages" presumed to flow from the new missile gap are likely to refer more to domestic U.S. politics than to U.S. fortunes in the realm of foreign policy.

Which brings me to the second misperception. The key decision now facing U.S. planners is not whether the United States should acquire a capability to destroy Russian missile silos, but whether it should acquire a *more efficient* capability to do so. Despite their small size, present U.S. ICBM's already can destroy a sizable portion (perhaps one-third) of the Soviet missile force in a first strike. In fact, U.S. ICBM's are more capable in this respect than their present Soviet counterparts. In calculating the probability that a missile will destroy a small hardened target, like a missile silo, the missile's accuracy (a major U.S. advantage) turns out to be far more important than the size of its warhead (a major Soviet advantage). If the United States and the Soviet Union both continue their present weapons-development programs, unconstrained by new SALT agreements, both will have the ability to destroy a large portion of the opponent's force of land-based missiles. While the USSR's potential in this respect is greater than that of the United States, because of the greater payload capacity of its missile, the U.S. potential is far from trivial. The decision now to be faced is what to do about this situation.

Which brings me to the third and most important simplism. Unfortunately, so long as nuclear weapons exist, choices among nuclear doctrines will be imperfect. The nation must tread a difficult path between the risks of nuclear war and the threats posed to national security by aggressive foreign powers. The choice facing the nation is not that between a good and a bad doctrine; it requires a far more subtle and complicated evaluation of relative risks and benefits.

For example, Mr. Luttwak points out that strategic forces planned on the basis of the tenets of mutual assured destruction (M.A.D.) assume certain risks with regard to the unauthorized launch of nuclear missiles. That is true. And that is why the first agreement to come out of the SALT negotiations dealt with procedures to be followed so that such a mishap would not trigger a general nuclear war.

In my view, however, the risks associated with the newly proposed doctrine far exceed those associated with mutual assured destruction. These risks come in two areas: (a) the new doctrine is more likely to result in continued competition between the superpowers in strategic armaments with negative consequences both for the allocation of national resources and for the nature of U.S.-USSR relations generally; and (b) the strategic postures resulting from the new doctrine would incorporate greater incentives, in the event of another U.S.-USSR confrontation, for one or the other to initiate nuclear war. . . .

BARRY M. BLECHMAN
The Brookings Institution
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward N. Luttwak's "Nuclear Strategy: The New Debate" sets out forcefully the major drawbacks of the strategic doctrine of mutual assured destruction, known to friend and foe alike as M.A.D. By implication, he favors a "counterforce" strategy, entailing a capability of substantially injuring Soviet nuclear power *after* receipt of a less-than-all-out attack by the Soviet Union. Regrettably, Mr. Luttwak ignores the deficiencies of counterforce, which are equally appalling:

1) *Destabilizing character.* A counterforce strategy inherently requires overwhelming superiority. In order to have much point, it requires that the nation employing it have nuclear weapons so overwhelming that, *after* a first-strike by its adversary, it can eradicate virtually all of the adversary's entire remaining nuclear weaponry. In order to have such a drastic second-strike potential, obviously the nation must have an even greater first-strike potential. This makes the adversary nervous. It makes *him* want superiority. In the U.S.-USSR context, neither side is likely to achieve its goal: the quest is very expensive and there is the risk that one side, enjoying a momentary technological advantage, will be tempted to try an actual first strike. Counterforce is destabilizing with a vengeance.

2) *The "irrational"-leader hypothesis.* It is hard to see how the U.S. would be safer from irrational leaders under a counterforce strategy. By definition, the irrational leader is not deterred merely by America's having the capability of extinguishing virtually all life in his country. Of course, counterforce would provide the U.S. with more protection from the lunatic's *second* nuclear salvo, but how many lunatic leaders are

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likely to be able to mount a second salvo anyway?

3) *Political significance.* Mr. Luttwak seems to assume that Soviet success at nuclear blackmail is attributable to the numerical edge in weaponry established by SALT 1. An alternative explanation (assuming that the premise of Soviet success is correct) is that the real Soviet advantage here derives from its reputation for ruthlessness, which may be far more politically significant than a modest edge in weaponry. If so, the idea that the U.S. political position would be improved by adopting a counterforce strategy would have to be abandoned.

4) *Impact on negotiation.* As noted above, counterforce theory requires superiority, thus (as a practical matter) undermining the concept of equality as a basis for stabilizing U.S.-USSR weapons construction. Moreover, the counterforce theory does nothing to help cure the greatest apparent obstacle to successful negotiations, namely, the inability to verify compliance with qualitative limitations without on-site inspections.

This is all rather gloomy. Neither strategy provides security against madmen in power; counterforce is an invitation to an arms race and may trigger a first-strike attempt by one side or the other; assured destruction in itself gives no assurance that it will be mutual—i.e., adopted by the Soviet Union. Both are very expensive.

Since genuine security is simply not an option, the range of choices should perhaps be broadened to include abandonment of nuclear weaponry altogether. This would, to be sure, leave us without security, but that, as we have seen, is not a feature that distinguishes it from M.A.D. or counterforce. It would have the advantage of eliminating any Russian incentive to embark on a preemptive strike against us, as there would be nothing to preempt. It would save resources, which we might (but might not) use intelligently. Above all, it would remove us from the ranks of potential practitioners of nuclear mass murder.

STEPHEN F. WILLIAMS
University of Colorado
School of Law
Boulder, Colorado

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK writes:

Barry M. Blechman and Stephen F. Williams take me to task for endorsing uncritically the Schlesinger strategy which they equate with a "counterforce" strategy. Both point out that total security will not be provided by either M.A.D. or any other feasible strategy. Both are right. But my article was an extended critique of M.A.D.; it was not an endorsement of an all-out counterforce strategy, nor can Schlesinger's strategy be described fairly as such. In fact, what I do endorse is only a long overdue modification of the M.A.D. strategy, which would add an element of "selective" deterrence to the all-or-nothing massive deterrence that the M.A.D. doctrine calls for. Until quite recently, all the contingency-attack plans in the computers of SAC covered only fairly large-scale retaliatory strikes. These plans certainly did not allow for the use of strategic power in truly small doses. This, incidentally, is how you would deal with the "irrational-leader" danger, the second point in Mr. Williams's letter: not, as he seems to believe, by "extinguishing virtually all life in his country," but rather by having the ability to launch accurate and selective attacks which would threaten only the irrational leader's nuclear arsenal, while minimizing damage to civilian life. As it is, with M.A.D. strategy and a M.A.D. posture (i.e., with fairly inaccurate and large weapons) the choices facing this country would be limited to massive attack, or compliance with blackmail, or, worse still, passive acceptance of the possibility of a truly irrational attack in exchange for the empty satisfaction of massive retaliation thereafter.

Mr. Blechman writes that I am mistaken in thinking the SALT-1 agreement unsatisfactory. In particular he points out that mere missile numbers are a very poor guide to the overall measurement of strategic power. He is right. Unfortunately, not only does the Russian missile force have 1,618 units as against only 1,054 for the United States, but the Russian ICBM's also happen to be much larger. And Mr. Blechman would hardly deny that at parity of range, the *overall payload* (throw-weight) of missile forces is now the only valid index of strategic power over time. For while missile numbers (and sizes) are frozen by the SALT-1 accords, Russian (and U.S.) research-and-development work is not. This means that the Russians can steadily validate their potential superiority by subdividing warheads and improving accuracies. So can the United States. But, for both, the ultimate scope of research and development is set by the overall throw-weights of the two missile forces, in which the Russian advantage is already of the order of 3:1, and still growing. (It could reach 5:1 within the terms of the SALT-1 accords, assuming full exploitation.)

My second "misperception," according to Mr. Blechman, is that I fail to note that the United States already has a counterforce capability. Of course it has. Any fairly accurate missile force will have some degree of efficacy in destroying missile silos as long as a lot of weapons can be fired in order to get reasonable probabilities of reaching within lethal range of *some* silos with *some* warheads. This is not the same as having an ICBM force accurate enough to do the job dependably. And here I can quote Mr. Blechman himself: "While the USSR's potential in this respect is greater than that of the United States . . . the U.S. potential is far from trivial." How true. Mr. Blechman is satisfied that a balance will obtain in the next several years. I am not: "far from trivial" is simply not good enough. The fundamental point is that *potential* capabilities matter a great deal even now, since the expectations that both sides entertain on tomorrow's strategic balance determine their bargaining strength at today's SALT-2 negotiations. It is not an accident that the recent Russian proposal tabled at SALT has been so outrageous.

My third error is labeled a "simplism" *(sic)* by Mr. Blechman: I am accused of offering a false choice between a "good" and a "bad" doctrine. But this sort of absolutist, indeed theological, approach is typical of the devotees of M.A.D. My position is much more modest: I would merely like to see the United States Congress reach a new consensus on a *politically adequate* strategy, one that would deter the Russians from brutal provocations like those that marked the October Middle East crisis.

With serene detachment Mr. Blechman equates "the two superpowers" and advises against Schlesinger's strategy on the grounds that it would accentuate their mutual competition. Unfortunately, the competition is already under

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way and with a vengeance: the Soviet Union has tested four different ICBM types in the twenty months since the SALT-1 agreements were signed, the same number that the United States has tested since 1961. It is true, of course, that the United States took the lead several years ago in developing the uniquely dangerous MIRV technology. But unlike Mr. Blechman, I accept the reality of this competition as an inevitable manifestation of the political struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States. I do not see them as "two superpowers" but as two very different countries which stand for very different things. I happen to prefer the United States. My first concern is therefore that the race should not be lost, although I share Mr. Blechman's concern that it should be slowed down, if possible.

Unlike Mr. Blechman's position, Mr. Williams's analysis is flawed by serious errors. It is *not true* that "a counterforce capability requires overwhelming superiority." It only requires *some* counterforce capability. Ninety-five-year-old Soviet marshals may be dreaming of acquiring a total counterforce capability, but no analyst in his right mind considers this a realistic possibility. What I do endorse is merely the acquisition of some counterforce capability against part of the Russian ICBM force in order to balance the similar Russian capability which is rapidly emerging, and so force the Soviet Union to desist from going further on a very dangerous path. Mr. Williams says that the "real Soviet advantage derives from a reputation for ruthlessness" rather than from the clear numerical advantages gained by the Soviet Union in SALT-1. He adds that "if so, the idea that the U.S. political position would be improved by adopting a counterforce strategy would have to be abandoned." This is very odd. In facing an adversary who thrives on a reputation for ruthlessness, the correct response is surely to cut him down to size, or at least to deny him the further advantage of strategic superiority, however limited (to the thin counterforce edge) and however partial (to the ICBM sector). Finally, Mr. Williams says that the adoption of Schlesinger's modification of the M.A.D. strategy would undermine the "concept of equality" as a basis for negotiations. The Russians do not share this quaint idea: in each and every official comment on SALT, détente, etc., Russian spokesmen invariably stress that all these good things derive from the superior strength of the Soviet Union; the word "equality" is never used. Power, as the Russians keep saying, is a dynamic phenomenon and "equality" between adversary powers merely describes a transitory moment in which descending and ascending power curves happen to intersect. Actually, I would agree that the deployment of a limited counterforce capability is a rather unsatisfactory way of preserving the overall military position of the United States (a total one would be very dangerous even if attainable). Unfortunately, present domestic-political realities do not seem to allow any alternative. It would surely be much better if the military strength of the United States could be reinforced to the required degree in *all* its dimensions, and not just in the dangerous and unrewarding strategic-nuclear sector.

The New Anti-Semitism

To the Editor of Commentary:

I have read Earl Raab's "Is There a New Anti-Semitism?" [May] in which he discusses the thesis put forward by Arnold Forster and Benjamin R. Epstein in their recent book, *The New Anti-Semitism*. Mr. Raab very gently hints at the fact that the "book" is essentially a padded piece of hack work, the sort of thing organizations issue to justify their own salaries to their membership.

Mr. Raab's willingness to accept the Forster-Epstein thesis that the new anti-Semitism "is based on insensitivity" disturbs me because what may be needed is less sensitivity and more frank discussion. I think, for example, that significant elements in the Jewish establishment have been "insensitive" to the Indochinese and to Third World groupings in our own country, but I would not leap from that occasionally painful insensitivity to the conclusion that the Jews involved were anti-black, or anti-Asian. I just think they were insensitive or at some points (as in the support some Jewish leaders gave to Nixon) making a choice based not on any hatred for blacks or Indochinese, but from a sense of the politics of insuring continued U.S. support for Israel.

Mr. Raab mentions me as "a leader" of the Committee for New Alternatives in the Middle East—which is technically correct since I am on the steering committee—and then goes on to quote somewhat out of context from an earlier article I had written. His point is that I am somehow opposed to the corporate existence of Judaism—and in this he could not be more wrong. But that is a matter for longer discussion. What did strike me as disturbing was Mr. Raab's casual reference to American Jews as "a distinct ethnic group," which they are not. One is curious how someone can play so prominent a role in intellectual life and end up trapped—as my own father is—with this myth of the Jews as a "distinct ethnic group." With such poor grounding in anthropology it is no wonder communication is difficult. Mr. Raab does not need to worry about my sensibilities, and I shan't worry about his. Hard discussion is required, and the hack work of a Forster, or the uninformed writings of a Raab will not be treated lightly because the authors are Jewish and there is some obligation to be sensitive.

The debate and dialogues have finally begun in the intellectual community and we will not be frightened off by suggestions that those of us raising these questions are anti-Semitic.

David McReynolds
War Resisters League
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . I cannot help but think that "corporate Judaism" is a euphemism for nationalism and for Zionism. Earl Raab assumes that corporate Judaism has held the Jewish people together since the Dispersion, and is essential to the Jewish way of existence. As a fact of history, this assumption is correct. Yet today's "spaceship earth" has no room for nationalistic patriotism of so prejudicial and deep a nature. This passion has to be moderated. No longer can anyone assert, my faith and/or my people right or wrong. Nationalism has been responsible for two world wars, for lesser wars, for millions of deaths, and continues to be an explosive force capable of generating tragedy and suffering for the entire human race.

I cannot accept blind patriotism, whether American, German, Israeli, Arab, Russian, Chinese, etc. . . . It is time, for all mankind's

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sake, that the humanist tradition of Judaism triumphed over prejudice and egoistic satisfaction. . . .

RICHARD HECKMAN
Sherman Oaks, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The balanced perspective and incisive analysis that one expects from Earl Raab are all present in his article. There are, nonetheless, several crucial issues that require more elaboration than Mr. Raab gives them.

The Forster-Epstein equation of both neutrality toward and manifest criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism is, as Mr. Raab suggests, a bit too simplistic. Yet Mr. Raab's own conception of the new anti-Semitism shares more common ground with Forster-Epstein than he apparently recognizes. Thus, Mr. Raab believes that a new anti-Semitism is emerging, insofar as the "willingness to allow the Jews their separate identity as a group . . . is now coming into question in America. . . . The new reluctance to grant legitimacy to Jews as a group is sufficient cause for anxiety, and a sufficient warrant for rethinking strategies of [Jewish] defense."

This characterization of the new anti-Semitism raises more questions than it answers. For one thing, precisely what kind of behavior is required of non-Jews vis-à-vis Jews that would "allow Jews their separate identity as a group"? A possible clue to this crucial issue is suggested in Mr. Raab's reference to the hesitance of some public-school officials about granting Jewish studies equal status with other ethnic studies (Black studies, Chicano studies, etc.) and the hesitance of community chests to allow Jewish welfare agencies a fair share of their funds. But surely Mr. Raab must have more weighty matters than these in mind when he speaks of "the new reluctance to grant legitimacy to Jews as a group." He thus seems not quite as candid on these important matters as he might be. This is suggested in his discussion of the debate in post-Revolutionary France as to whether the modern Christian state should grant Jews civil rights as individuals or as a corporate entity.

A more candid position on the issue of the legitimacy of Jews as a group in American society is provided by Marshall Sklare in his article, "The Conversion of the Jews" (COMMENTARY, September 1973). Mr. Sklare argues that the new evangelist movements among Protestants—especially the Key 73 Task Force—violate the very survival of Jews by conducting their proselytizing activity among Jews, especially Jewish college students. He therefore claims that Jewish survival—or what Mr. Raab calls the legitimacy of Jews as a group—demands the cessation of Christian proselytizing among Jews.

Although Mr. Raab's analysis of the problem of the separate identity of Jews as a group is, as suggested, somewhat ambiguous, he would appear to favor an institutionalized political solution to this problem. I thought this a rather curious feature of Mr. Raab's discussion. For one thing, any major effort to realize a political solution to the problem of ethnic survival would add a new dimension to the nature of ethnic cleavages in American society. This would entail, among other things, an explicit policy of interference with the processes of upward mobility in a secular modern society like ours—especially the processes of cultural dispersion of ethnic groups and their intermixture through intermarriage. Such political interference with the societal consequences of upward mobility of ethnic groups would have reactionary consequences for American society.

Mr. Raab appears to be unaware of, or indifferent to, the neo-reactionary implications of a policy of interference. This is partly revealed, I think, in his discussion of the "corporate" alternative to the traditional Jewish status in post-Revolutionary France—an alternative, he suggests, that would have been superior to the mere granting of civil rights to Jews *as individuals*. For example, he claims that Clermont-Tonnere's argument in favor of granting rights to Jews as individuals but "to Jews as a nation, nothing," called into question the legitimacy of Jews "as a group . . . and some Jews began to talk about themselves as individuals who just happened to have an alternative religious persuasion." If this discussion has any meaning in the context of Mr. Raab's article, that meaning is this: he considers some type of "corporate" solution, politically sustained, a possible alternative to the growing threats

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to the identity of Jews as a group.

Precisely how far Mr. Raab would be willing to press a "corporate" solution to such consequences of Jewish upward mobility as Jewish-Gentile intermarriage is not made clear in his article, but his concluding comment ("the new reluctance to grant legitimacy to Jews as a group is . . . sufficient warrant for rethinking strategies of [Jewish] defense") suggests that he is pondering the matter. If he is, he might be guided by the only two experiences in American history involving a variant of a "corporate" solution to ethnic cleavages—namely, the Negro and American Indian experiences. In regard to American Indians, the salient feature of the "corporate" solution entailed what might be called a territorialization of Indian ethnicity within continental America, guaranteeing Indians—after a fashion of course—protection from the ethnic-disintegrating forces of an industrial society. For Negroes no such internal territorialization of black ethnicity was provided, though both black nationalists and white Communists have proposed such a "corporate" solution. Instead, both a normative and politico-legal system were fashioned to differentiate blacks from whites—or rather, to protect the legitimacy of whites as a group, especially in areas like religion, marriage, and other societal interactions. (There is perhaps a third variant of a "corporate" solution which might be called the Amish syndrone. This solution, associated primarily with Protestant sects like the Amish, Mennonites, etc., entails a self-imposed corporatization of ethnicity, whereby the usual craving of American ethnic groups for materialistic success as the salient determinant of social status is resisted in favor of preserving their particularistic values. The wider American society, in its turn, adjusts to this self-inflicted retreat to a primordial ethnic culture, for it is essentially benign politically and institutionally.)

For my part, neither of these models for preserving the identity of ethnic groups in American society comes highly recommended. Mr. Raab is, I'm sure, as aware of their numerous pitfalls as I am. He might, therefore, have other solutions in mind—solutions more acceptable to a free society, directed at matters easily manageable within our political traditions, like the hesitancy of public-school officials about accepting Jewish studies co-equally with other ethnic studies. Any other solutions—especially those designed to protect Jews from the inevitable consequences of upward mobility like inter-ethnic marriage—can have only reactionary consequences for American society and politics.

MARTIN KILSON
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

EARL RAAB writes:

I offer the letters of David McReynolds, Richard Heckman, and Martin Kilson as Exhibit A. Mr. McReynolds assures us that he is in favor of "the corporate existence of Judaism," but finds it "disturbing" to think of American Jews as a "distinct ethnic group, which they are not." Whatever term Mr. McReynolds would like to use in place of "ethnic," it remains that he is disturbed by any social group —and here I give the dictionary's first definition of an ethnic group —"that claims or is accorded special status on the basis of complex, often variable traits including linguistic, religious, ancestral, or physical characteristics" (the definition later adds "national or cultural").

Richard Heckman indicates that today's earth "has no room" for "corporate Judaism," characterized as it is by "prejudice and egoistic satisfaction," and remarks that it is time that the "humanist tradition of Judaism triumphed" over all that. He feels, it is clear, that the "humanist tradition" is now shared by everyone, and that it is therefore no longer really necessary to be Jewish and that there is no longer any room for that which "has held the Jewish people together."

Messrs. McReynolds and Heckman come together in a hostility toward communal Judaism—except perhaps when Jews get together periodically in religious congregation to have their universal, humanistic values recharged. This hostility is *not* anti-Semitism in the sense that the term was invented in the late 19th century, or in the sense that these sentiments in themselves make Messrs. McReynolds and Heckman anti-Semites in the Nazi mold. It is not helpful to label them as such, but hostility it is—an old-new hostility toward "the Jew" which has its own ominous overtones. And that was, of course, the very point of my article.

Martin Kilson is absolutely right when he suggests that there are "several crucial issues that require more elaboration" than they received in the article. One such issue is whether the Jews *should* persist in maintaining their communal and historical identity. I'm not sure whether this is anyone else's business—unless perhaps someone would like to start the debate by offering some cogent social reasons why Jews should not so persist, which might be an instructive, and particularly a self-instructive, place to begin.

It is around this point, indeed, which reflects the *fact* of hostility toward communal Judaism, that Mr. Kilson joins Messrs. McReynolds and Heckman; namely, in his suggestion that ethnicity is only legitimate as a function of low-income ghetto life, and will and should naturally disappear as a result of "the inevitable consequences of upward mobility. . . ." But Jews have experienced that upward mobility, and, perversely, have refused to disappear as communal Jews.

Mr. Kilson's most striking point with respect to unelaborated issues has to do with "what kind of behavior is required of non-Jews that would allow Jews their separate identity," and, especially, what is required of American society in this connection. This is a good question. It was not dealt with in the article, and it deserves to be. In the process, it will be necessary to deal with Mr. Kilson's well-grounded *caveats*.

Correction

In Edward Jay Epstein's article, "Did the Press Uncover Watergate?" (July), it was incorrectly stated that the *Wall Street Journal* received the Pulitzer Prize for revealing the scandal which forced the resignation of former Vice President Agnew. Actually, it was the Drew Pearson Award for Excellence in Investigative Journalism, not the Pulitzer Prize, which Jerry Landauer of the *Wall Street Journal* received for his work in reporting the story.

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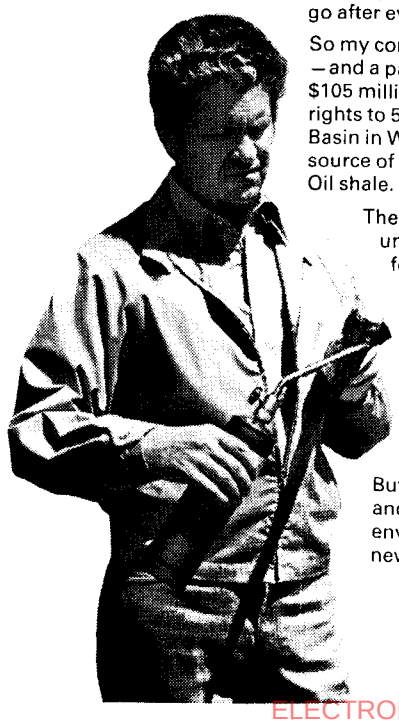

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The Gathering Storm

Walter Laqueur

ALMOST two years ago, in October 1972, Victor Zorza announced in a column in the Washington *Post* the coming of a new "golden age." Let the skeptics scoff, Mr. Zorza wrote, ten years from now they would be convinced. The world was moving toward a period of reconciliation, toward generations of peace: the Middle East conflict would be settled within the next three to six months, Middle Eastern oil would bring the great powers together. This messianic vision, Mr. Zorza explained, did not derive from an inherently optimistic frame of mind, but from a "cold assessment of the facts of international life, from a judgment that the self-interest of the great powers imposes on them patterns of cooperation that none can evade."

The tenor of the column reflected, if a little ecstatically, the mood of the period. The same message—that peace had come and wars were over—was contained, *grosso modo*, in the speeches and writings of leading Western statesmen from Nixon and Kissinger to Willy Brandt. President Nixon's Report to Congress on U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's promised "an international structure which could silence the sounds of war for the remainder of this century," while Dr. Kissinger himself appeared at a conference appropriately named *Pacem in Terris*.

In short, there was general agreement that the postwar era had come to an end, that a turning-point in world affairs had been reached, that the old bipolar system (confrontation) had been replaced by a new multipolar system (negotiation), and that as a result there would be greater stability all the world over. As Professor Alastair Buchan, a former director of the Institute of Strategic Studies in London, was shortly to write in a book entitled *The End of the Postwar Era*:

> At the beginning of 1973 the ordinary citizen recalling China's admission to the UN in 1971 and her recognition by almost every significant country, having read of the strategic arms limitation and other agreements between the Soviet Union and the United States in May 1972, remembering the signing of the intra-Germany treaty and the electoral victory of the West German who signed it in November, and witnessing the final withdrawal of the United States from Vietnam in 1973, might pardonably feel that for the first time in forty years (that is, since the Japanese invasion of Manchuria or Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland) something that could be called peace has descended on the world. Men must have felt like this when learning of the Treaty of Westphalia.

So too Professor Karl Kaiser, a leading West German peace researcher. "Not only is the probability of military conflict less than it has ever been since World War II," wrote Professor Kaiser, but "the conviction is growing in both East and West that the situation has evolved to a point where relations between the two sides might be put on a qualitatively different level by expanding areas of cooperation and breaking the vicious circle of the arms race." Hence his conclusion that "the next few years can be used to create the conditions for a moderate and peaceful international system in the remaining decades of this century."

Europeans who still felt a little apprehensive with regard to future prospects were assured by George F. Kennan that "Finlandization" was a nonsensical idea. Short of actual occupation, Mr. Kennan said, no nation could fully enforce its will upon another, and anyway "the smaller and weaker a country, the more sensitive its government to any hint of military pressure being applied against it, and the more ready its resistance to anything that smacks of pressure or blackmail from the stronger power." If Europe could muster the political will, it would, according to Mr. Kennan, have nothing to fear from Russia or anyone else (which was rather like telling a patient that he would be quite healthy if he were not seriously ill).

Of Mr. Zorza's ten years that might be needed to convince the skeptics, only two have passed and some will argue that all we need is a little patience. But the interim balance is not encouraging. The mood has markedly changed, and not just because there have been second thoughts about détente and Soviet intentions. Willy Brandt, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize and the

WALTER LAQUEUR, a contributing editor of COMMENTARY, is director of the Institute of Contemporary History in London and the author of many works on international affairs, including *The Rebirth of Europe* and, most recently, *The Middle East and World Politics*.

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architect of *Ostpolitik*, made his belief known among his confidants well before his sudden resignation that democracy would not survive in Europe much longer. And there were gloomy reflections in a recent editorial in the London *Economist*:

> It may be that the idea of settling a conflict by the splitting of differences, like its brother-idea of limited war, is a relic of the consciousness of the 18th and 19th centuries that is being rejected by the harsher vision of the second half of the 20th century. It is total victory, unconditional surrender, that is required now. It is one more sign, among many others, of the end of a relatively rational period of history.

This is all a far cry from the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 and the golden age of 1972-73. But the apprehensions of the *Economist* are more realistic than the great expectations of the heralds of a golden age. For in addition to the major international conflicts which have still not disappeared—a possible military confrontation between the Soviet Union and China, the decline of détente, the lack of cooperation between the United States and Europe—a series of new crises is shaping up. It was perhaps the cardinal error of the heralds of the golden age to take internal stability and domestic prosperity and contentment for granted. Yet it is just in those areas that the new crises are developing. There is, furthermore, much reason to believe that these new crises will be only a prelude to a major international upheaval such as the world has not experienced since World War II.

II

It is to economics that we must turn first, and here we find that it is no longer a matter of dispute whether there will be a worldwide depression. The only questions now are how far it will go and what its political repercussions are likely to be.

Between 1960 and 1973 the average rate of inflation in the U.S. was 2.8 per cent, in Western Europe it was 4.3 per cent, and in Japan it was 4.8 per cent. Between April 1973 and April 1974, the comparable rates were almost 10, 12, and 24 per cent respectively, and at present they are running even higher. Even West Germany, which has the soundest economy in Western Europe, faces an inflationary rate of about 8 per cent this year. Keynes wrote in his *Economic Consequences of the Peace* that debauching the currency is the best way of overturning the existing basis of society—wrongly attributing the saying to Lenin. Nowadays economists agree that a country can comfortably live with a rate of inflation of 5 per cent, and some countries have found ingenious ways to prosper at a higher rate. But with the notable exception of Iceland, there are not many examples in history of democratic regimes surviving years of hyper-inflation (i.e., 20 per cent or more). To combat inflation various highly unpopular measures, such as deflation or devaluation, are needed, which do not even always work; "stagflation" and "slumpflation," a combination of stagnation and inflation, have been a characteristic feature of certain economies in recent years. This has resulted in increased social tension (class struggle in old-fashioned parlance), in mass strikes, and generally speaking in all kinds of severe strains and stresses.

Not all industrial countries are affected with equal severity: West Germany, with a GNP now almost as great as that of France and Britain combined, will finish 1974 with a substantial foreign-trade surplus. But most other countries will not be able to cover their balance-of-payments deficits, caused above all by the quadrupling of oil prices. For the general public the energy crisis was over the moment the lines in front of the gas stations disappeared. But in actual fact the quadrupling of the price of oil has created a worldwide crisis, the full financial and political effects of which are as yet to be felt. Britain, Italy, France, and Japan will have a combined trade deficit of some $34 billion; they have borrowed $12 billion from American banks which will keep them going for about a year. But they will not be able to repay these loans, and they will find it very difficult to get new ones unless the price of oil is drastically reduced. Oil priced at more than $8 a barrel means a world slump (it is more than $11 at present). Alternatively disaster could be averted if the oil-producing countries invested their revenues in long-term projects in Europe rather than engaging in currency speculation and the purchase of real estate; they may do so one day, they have not done it so far.*

* Some economists have argued that there is no real danger to the world monetary system because the oil-producing countries will have to spend virtually all of their increased earnings or lend them to the industrialized world. This theory of "recycling" may well be valid *sub specie aeternitatis*, but it is not of much help in dealing with a crisis which is already at hand. For all one knows, the Arab countries will prefer to invest in currency speculation and the acquisition of real estate rather than in industrial enterprises or banks. Fred Bergsten writes in the New York *Times* that "the Arabs will not bury the money in the ground. Thus, there can be no deficit in the balance of payments of the industrial world as a whole." This reminds one of the now defunct notion that the Arabs cannot drink their oil. In all probability they will "bury" part of their money and invest the rest in rich and efficient economies such as that of West Germany, not in any which are poor risks. It is also unlikely that the United States and West Germany will be willing to cover the payment deficits of the other European countries (not to mention the non-European ones) for many years to come. Some arrangements will no doubt be made to keep world trade afloat, but not before severe shocks, economic and political, are registered, and these new arrangements will probably not be very satisfactory for many countries.

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It is only fair to add that the inflationary spiral was triggered off even earlier by price rises in grain and in other commodities. The terms of trade for the producers of raw materials deteriorated between 1950 and 1970, and the theoreticians of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) such as Raoul Prebisch predicted that this process would go on forever. It was perhaps most pronounced with regard to foodstuffs. The prices of wheat, maize, and rice were considerably lower in 1971 than in 1948; they were in fact below pre-war levels. The prices of milk and soybeans also decreased, though slightly, over these years. Only the price of animal protein rose—twofold in the case of fish, more than threefold for beef and veal. But the main producers of exportable supplies of food are the United States and Canada which dispose of about as big a share (80 per cent) of the grain market as the Middle East does of oil. They were not disturbed by the low prices and neither, of course, were the countries of the Third World. Then suddenly a reversal set in with respect not to grain but to raw materials like copper, zinc, tin, and rubber. In 1973 the price of all these materials began to double and treble, and then, most fateful of all, came the rise in the price of oil. Oil is the most important commodity by far in world trade, totaling some $135 billion, whereas world exports of sugar, the second most important item, are only $5 billion; of copper, cotton, and coffee, $4 billion each; and of rubber, $3 billion. To keep prices high, commodity producers followed the example of the oil producers and established cartels of their own. First were the bauxite producers (Jamaica, Guyana, Australia, Sierra Leone, and others), then the main copper producers (Chile, Peru, Zaire, and Zambia). But it is doubtful whether they will be equally successful, because the dependence of the industrialized nations on raw materials other than oil is less substantial. (The U.S., to give but one example, produces 90 per cent of its own needs in copper.)

The commodity boom has resulted in a sharp division in the Third World, with some nations earning fabulous riches almost overnight, whereas others are literally being reduced to bankruptcy and starvation. And since nature has distributed its gifts arbitrarily, the sparsely populated countries profit most and the more populous ones face disaster. Thus the oil producers last year took $66 billion from the industrialized countries, but more than half that sum went to five countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar) with a total population of 11 million —which is not exactly the economics of Robin Hood. To be more specific, per-capita income in Abu Dhabi will be about $47,000 this year, compared with $40 in neighboring Yemen. Libya, with fewer than two million inhabitants (of whom half are Bedouins who have never heard of Qaddafi and Jaloud), now has a per-capita income about thirty times that of neighboring Egypt. Zambia, with 4 million inhabitants, earns $800 million from its copper exports, whereas neighboring Tanzania (with 13 million people) and Kenya (with 10 million) confront zero economic growth. India has to pay $1.3 billion for its oil imports this year, which is about half the value of its foreign-currency holdings. Black Africa's total bill will be about $1 billion, which for most African countries means some 30-50 per cent of the value of their exports.

To forestall a general attack and to shift responsibility, the oil producers have admonished the industrialized nations to curb inflation, which in the circumstances is less than helpful advice. Algeria called for a special session of the UN General Assembly; there were endless speeches, a flow of documents, and a declaration of principles, but the outcome in practical terms was precisely nil. Some vague promises were made concerning international funds to the poor developing countries. But eventually it emerged that only a few oil producers were willing to help. Saudi Arabia claimed to have allocated $2 billion (most of which was apparently paid to the Soviet Union for arms supplied to Egypt and Syria) and the other Arab countries gave a few hundred million dollars. The Shah of Iran promised $1 billion and, in addition, may actually give India a billion; however poor, India is still a power to reckon with, and the Shah has every reason to fear a breakdown on the subcontinent. By contrast, smaller countries like Sri Lanka (Ceylon), which suffer as much as India but do not pull much weight, were quite unsuccessful in their foraging operations. Altogether, the oil producers promised to put $2.75 billion at the disposal of the International Monetary Fund, but it is very doubtful whether the money will be forthcoming in the near future. And even if the oil producers should double or treble the amount, it would still be quite insufficient to cover the increased deficits of the poor countries.

THE situation is further aggravated by the food crisis. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, world grain reserves now amount only to 27 days consumption, and thirty developing countries face a catastrophe. Stocks have indeed run down during the last two years, but the immediate situation is probably not quite so bad as would appear at first sight, for the UN statistics refer to the time when stocks are lowest in each country—i.e., to the weeks before the new harvest is brought in. The immediate crisis in 1973 was caused by the U.S.-Soviet grain deal, the biggest (and in its consequences most damaging) such deal in history. The price of a bushel of wheat was $1.40 in 1972; as a result of the Soviet grain deal, the ensuing

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speculation, and some other factors, it went up to $6.36. By June 1974, it had fallen again to $3.40, averting any immediate danger of mass starvation. Nevertheless the outlook for the next five to ten years is still bleak, and for the poor countries of Southeast Asia and Africa, about one-third of mankind, it is disastrous. According to Professor Egbert de Vries's estimate,* those countries will be saddled with a deficit of some $15 billion. A few of them, like Nigeria and Indonesia, will be able to compensate for the high prices by selling their raw materials at high prices. But this does not mean that 125 million Indonesians and 80 million Nigerians will all benefit from the boom; distributive mechanisms simply do not exist in those countries and the new wealth will not necessarily trickle down. The fact that a few people will amass great riches while the many go hungry will make for an acute revolutionary situation.

The *long-term* prospects for solving the food crisis are not that bleak, provided the population explosion is brought under control, provided the price of fertilizers is reduced (the price of phosphate increased fourfold during the last year, the price of urea sevenfold), and provided a number of other preconditions are met. Yet whatever happens, for a long time to come food will be scarce, and the "rich" countries—meaning the industrialized West, Japan, and the oil producers—will outbid the poor nations for it. Since there is only a slim chance of establishing an international mechanism for coping with world inflation and for regulating world production and trade in the near future, the danger of economic chaos is very real, and this, needless to say, could have far-reaching political consequences. There will be a growing trend toward economic nationalism and warfare. Money alone, on the other hand, will not safeguard the existence of the new small super-rich. The Persian Gulf mini-states and Libya may well be taken over by more powerful neighbors, Such action may appear improbable now; at a time of real crisis the temptation will be overwhelming. These tiny countries may want to insure their survival by establishing foreign legions or by acquiring small arsenals of nuclear arms. They will look for insurance by allying themselves with more powerful states—the recent rapprochement between Libya and the Soviet Union could well be a straw in the wind—but in most of these cases the cure will be worse then the disease. Sooner or later, the Abu Dhabi foreign legion will take the country over,† and the Soviet Union is not likely to be guided by altruism in its role as protective power.

III

A MAJOR economic crisis inevitably exacerbates domestic tensions which can be contained more or less successfully during quieter periods. True, not all severe crises are fatal, and bankrupt countries, too, continue to exist. Pharaonic Egypt survived its seven lean years, but then it did not try to combine free collective bargaining, a welfare state, and price stability; the decision-making process was somewhat simpler than in a modern parliamentary democracy.

Today, poor countries and rich, backward and developed, are confronting the same danger. If, however, an "index of vulnerability" were established, the Indian subcontinent would take first place. India is the one major nation in which standards of living have actually declined since the end of World War II; and yet it has also been near the top of the Asian list of rising consumer prices during the last twelve months, while industrial output has steadily decreased since 1972. Of India's 580 million inhabitants, about two-thirds are illiterate, nearly 100 million are unemployed, and some 170 million are underemployed. There are more blind people in India than industrial workers, and the overwhelming majority still lives in villages as it did two thousand years ago. About one-third of the rural and almost half of the urban population are permanently undernourished. As for deeper evils such as the caste system and the dead weight of Hindu superstition (with 120 million untouchables), they are well-known and need not be rehearsed.

In the 1960's it was announced that the "green revolution" would transform the countryside; yet it soon emerged that the number of landless peasants was rising rapidly. Then a mere two years ago, after the famous victory over Pakistan, Mrs. Gandhi boasted that India was about to solve its problems through its own efforts; foreign aid would no longer be needed, India was about to defeat poverty. But the tide turned, and Mrs. Gandhi—who has inherited all the arrogance and self-righteousness but few of the redeeming features of her father, the late Jawaharlal Nehru—had to admit that 1973 would be the most difficult year in India's history. This was quite true, but 1974 is turning out to be far more difficult yet, and the years to come will be worse still. Close observers of the Indian scene have reached the conclusion that short of a miracle the country will fall apart, perhaps after an interlude of military dictatorship.

At present India is held together by a national party, the Congress, which is rapidly disintegrating, by a fairly efficient army and police force, by a much less efficient bureaucracy, by tradition, and simply by inertia. In the past the strong sep-

* In a forthcoming study, *The World Food Crisis,* Center for Strategic and International Studies and Sage Publications.

† "It would be possible for a foreign visitor to spend a week in Abu Dhabi without so much as meeting one native-born Abu Dhabian" (London *Times,* May 23, 1974).

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aratist forces claiming autonomy (there are fourteen major languages and countless local dialects in India) were somehow contained. But as the strains grow and the general decomposition continues, the day may come when the central government will no longer be able to impose its will. The most likely outcome is not violent revolution but the gradual spread of chaos, starvation on a massive scale, and epidemics, with local governments perhaps taking over many functions of the central government (a province such as Uttar Pradesh is more populous than any European country). It is quite possible that smaller administrative units will be better fitted to survive the coming storms. The Communists may come to power in some regions, but a nationwide victory seems out of the question, and not just because of the bitter struggle between the pro-Soviet party and the Maoists. The Indian Communist leaders are not notably more efficient than other Indian politicians, and the magnitude of India's problems would defy even the ruthlessness of a Stalin.

A collapse in India would be a calamity for the Soviet Union, for India would expect assistance from its friend and ally in the north. It need hardly be said that help on this scale (Cuba multiplied by sixty) would be an intolerable strain on the Soviet economy. To make matters worse, there would be no corresponding benefits, for Moscow already exerts all the political influence and has all the military bases in India it needs. Yet a Soviet refusal to help the Indians would automatically strengthen China's position on the subcontinent, and this the Russians could not permit to happen under any circumstances. The Soviet Union would therefore look to the United States, to Iran, and to the Arab oil producers to provide permanent assistance while maintaining and strengthening its own position in India.

It is unlikely that the atomic bomb will save India; the expense involved is staggering for such a poor country. According to fairly reliable calculations, maintaining a small, high-quality nuclear force requires a budget of $6 billion over a period of ten years. If so, India's GNP will be reduced by 25 per cent. A prominent Indian member of parliament has claimed that his government's professions of peaceful intent are a mere "fig leaf," and that India is setting out to become a global power. Such claims are unreal: India will not become a global power in the foreseeable future. But there is a very real danger that the logic of events may induce the Indians to export the products of their new industry. India has traveled a long way since the days of Mahatma Gandhi and *Satyagraha,* and there should be no illusions as to the restraint and responsibility of the country's present leaders. Faced with an internal breakdown, would the Indian government hesitate to sell nuclear devices to Iran, to Kuwait, to Qaddafi—or to anyone else who might be in the market? Would it not at the very least use the threat of selling nuclear weapons to blackmail the superpowers—above all the United States—into providing aid on a massive scale? Nuclear devices will not solve India's domestic problems: they will not provide work for the 75 per cent of university graduates who are at present unemployed, they will not provide food for the 175 million Indians who vegetate below the poverty line of $30 a year. But they might serve as a last desperate measure to prevent total collapse.

Little need be said about India's neighbors. After the secession from Pakistan there was a wave of tremendous enthusiasm in East Bengal; by now it is obvious that the new state of Bangladesh is not viable. Per-capita income is $70 (as compared with India's $110), the price of rice and other staple foods has gone up fourfold, and the assassination of political figures seems to be the main growth industry. Sri Lanka (Ceylon) has not overcome the effects of the abortive student revolution three years ago. Under the mismanagement of Mrs. Bandaranaike's government, this fertile island has become a beggar nation second only to Bangladesh. Burma, like India, is worse off now than ten or fifteen years ago; the population increase outstrips the growth rate in industry and agriculture. The White Flag guerrilla movement, which is supported by China, has not been defeated, and Ne Win's hold is limited to the big cities.

Some Indians would like to liquidate what remains of Pakistan. There has been talk about forcibly dividing the country into four independent smaller units: Punjab, Sind, Beluchistan, and Pakhtunistan. The Indians support uprisings in Beluchistan whereas the Afghans have been active in the northwest frontier province, claiming that the oppressed Pakistani Pathans long to be reunited with their happy brethren on the Afghan side of the border. Pakistan, for its part, is quietly rearming with the backing of Iran and certain Arab oil states, hoping to recover some of its losses if and when India should collapse. But the Pakistani army has lost its self-confidence and there is no domestic leadership; the governing People's party is in an even more advanced state of disintegration than the Congress party in India. There have been discreet hints from the Shah that he would be willing to extend the benefits of his successful rule to his fellow Moslems on Iran's eastern borders should Afghanistan (backed by the Russians) press for the secession of the northern provinces. Facing undiminished hostility from both India and Afghanistan, Pakistanis may one day avail themselves of this generous offer.

The events on the Indian subcontinent will affect the lives of some 750 million people; the

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crises in the smaller countries of East and Southeast Asia are by comparison almost insignificant. In Cambodia about four-fifths of the population now lives under Khmer Rouge rule, and the victory of the Pathet Lao seems only a question of time: in the recently established coalition government the Pathet Lao was given about half the seats in the cabinet. In South Vietnam the war continues; some 100,000 South Vietnamese have been killed, wounded, or listed missing since the armistice came into force eighteen months ago. The North Vietnamese do not aim at a quick, dramatic takeover; they seem to be convinced that they are in a "no-lose" position and that the South is bound to fall into their hands anyway in a few years.

South Korea has been hit hard by the economic crisis, and the government is feeling the effects of its foreign political isolation. There is the ever-present danger from the North, but so far as President Park is concerned, there is an even greater danger from domestic opposition, both from within the army and from the students. In the Philippines martial law was imposed in 1972, but President Marcos has not overcome the Moslem insurgency in Mindanao and Sulu. However, his domestic record is slightly better than average by Asian standards; sizable land holdings have been distributed to poor peasants, and if the oil bill of the country has gone up steeply, so has the income from copra, sugar, and other local exports. The Philippines are not threatened by a foreign invasion and they have an even chance of surviving the flood more or less intact.

As for Indonesia, it has benefited even more than the Philippines from the dramatic reversal in the terms of trade; its foreign-exchange income will be 40 per cent higher in 1974 than last year. But the survival of the regime depends entirely on the cohesion of the army—or, to be precise, of the generals (who also happen as individuals to be among the main profiteers of the present boom). There is growing social tension; a rebellion on the outlying islands could spread to Java, and cause the overthrow of the system.

To summarize: in some Asian countries the storm may break in a year or two, in others it may take a little longer, some may be hit harder than others, but it is unlikely that anyone will be spared altogether.

WHEN the collapse comes on the Indian subcontinent and in Southeast Asia, it will be unreasonable to blame the Russians, who have little to gain from it. In the Middle East, on the other hand, direct and substantial Soviet interests are involved. The Soviet Union has played, and continues to play, a negative role in the Arab-Israeli conflict; the idea that the Russians would behave responsibly and constructively if only given a chance to act as an honest broker belongs to the realm of fantasy. It is perfectly true that the Russians would be willing to guarantee a *Pax Sovietica* in the Middle East such as prevails in Eastern Europe; but the Soviet Union has no interest in the restoration of peace so long as it is not the dominant force in the area. To strengthen its position it will support the Iraqis and the South Yemenis against Saudi Arabia, the Palestinians and the Syrians against Israel. The great prize is of course not Suez or the Golan, but the Persian Gulf. Whether the road to Paris and London leads through Peking and Calcutta, as Lenin thought, is a moot point; it is more certain that Kuwait and Abu Dhabi can be reached via Damascus and Baghdad. The Russians have been quietly building up their military position in the area, and they have not neglected the small oil-producing states either, with Kuwait as the focal point of their political activities.

Egypt and Saudi Arabia are at present less than helpful so far as Soviet policy in the region is concerned. Sadat's about-face following the Yom Kippur war has no doubt caused much anger in Moscow, and it serves as a warning that the same could happen in Syria one day. Sadat's foreign policy, to make matters worse, is quite popular inside Egypt, whereas the Russians are not. Generally speaking, Soviet ideology—not to mention the Soviet system—has lost much of its attraction over the last ten or fifteen years; radicalization in the Arab world has taken different directions. But in a long-term perspective, given Egypt's unsolved and perhaps insoluble domestic problems, the intrinsic poverty of the country, and its dependence on outside financial aid, Sadat's position is anything but strong. The workers clamor for higher wages, the intellectuals demand a more radical policy. Despite his successes, Sadat's political base remains fairly narrow; with Soviet help the Libyans will do their best to overthrow his regime.

The political structures elsewhere in the area are equally vulnerable. There has been a great deal of talk in the Arab countries about "our oil," but everyone in the Middle East knows that most Arab countries (Egypt, the Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, the two Yemens, etc.) do not benefit from the oil boom, and even inside the oil-producing countries, the spoils are very unevenly divided. There will eventually be a redistribution of wealth in the Middle East, and it will not be achieved by peaceful means. The survival of the Saudi regime is thus highly problematical; it may last for another decade, it could be overthrown next week.

Turkey and Iran, by long tradition the strongest and most stable countries in the area, have not been by-passed by the general turmoil. The Shah may talk with pity about Europe's deca-

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dence and the dire prospects facing Japan, but the future of his own regime is by no means assured, and its new wealth has, in some respects, made Iran more vulnerable than in the past. Turkey, gradually drifting toward neutralism, also suffers from great economic strains and internal dissension. Once upon a time there was a broad internal consensus in Turkish politics, but it seems virtually impossible now to form a stable government; the forecasts made not so long ago about Turkey's brilliant prospects after decades of eclipse were, to say the least, premature.

The Middle East, in short, is certainly not among the regions threatened with economic collapse, but the political outlook is anything but encouraging; and it would be no better even if Israel did not exist.

FINALLY there is Europe. The pessimism voiced by the present writer in these pages more than two years ago* was thought excessive at the time. But in some respects one's worst fears have been surpassed. Italy has in fact opted out of the Common Market, Britain is crippled and will at best be a burden on the community even if its demands for renegotiation are accepted. That the momentum toward political unity had disappeared was obvious two years ago, that greater military cooperation could not be expected was in the cards even then. Since 1972 further cuts in defense spending have become necessary in several countries under the impact of the economic crisis. Two years ago, in other words, the danger was that Europe would no longer make progress toward the goals it had set itself. Today Europe is in full retreat.

Americans have often wondered about Germany's curious reluctance to take the lead. Economically the strongest country, it is now also the most stable politically, and has the most effective army. But a German-led Europe, however discreetly engineered, is an utter impossibility in the light of recent history. In Germany, moreover, there is a growing unwillingness to foot the bill for the Common Market. When Helmut Schmidt took over from Willy Brandt, he told friends that he was no longer ready "to invest in that bankrupt association." A rash statement, not to be taken literally perhaps, but symptomatic of the prevailing mood. West Germany under Schmidt will maintain its ties with the U.S., and so will France under Giscard d'Estaing, partly because these leaders are Atlanticists by conviction, partly because the logic of events is driving them into closer association with the senior partner in the alliance. There will be closer collaboration between France and West Germany, possibly the overall customs union will be restored in due time. But politically Europe is back now where it was a quarter of a century ago—on a higher level of material well being: a house divided, unable to defend itself.

Southern Europe, from Portugal to Greece, constitutes the gravest immediate problem. Everyone, or almost everyone, sympathizes with the cause of revolution in countries which have been subject to military dictatorship; unfortunately, there is always the danger that after a short interval of freedom and general rejoicing, these countries will be as unfree as before. The Communists, however few in number—there were two thousand of them in Portugal—emerge as the only political party with its apparatus intact, because they are best adapted to function in conditions of illegality. Thus they have a head start over democratic forces, of which they make the most. The struggle for power in Portugal is not over; it has just begun.

The turn of Spain may be next. Since the assassination of Prime Minister Carrero Blanco, his successor, Arias Navarro, albeit a right-winger, has followed a comparatively liberal policy. Censorship, relatively mild even before,† has been further loosened, and there is talk about the restoration of pluralism in Spanish political life. But the lesson drawn by the Spanish Right from the Portuguese example is that Caetano was overthrown because he was not authoritarian enough, and they are opposed to any more "experiments." The Franco regime has to wage war on many fronts—against the trade unions, the students, the separatist movements among the Basques and Catalans, and to a growing degree against the Church. The Church, circumspect as ever, is preparing for the post-Franco era. The Archbishop of Barcelona openly attacked the regime recently for its "institutionalized violence," and there are many indications—not only among the lower clergy—that the Church wishes to dissociate itself from a regime which will not last much longer. There are advocates of liberal reform even in the army: General Allegria, the recently deposed chief of the General Staff, was sent countless monocles by unknown well-wishers after Spinola's coup in Lisbon.

In the past, two important considerations inhibited the revolutionary movement in Spain. First, and most important, there was the memory of a civil war in which one million Spaniards were killed or wounded and many more lost their homes and property. Even for many opponents of the regime the risk of another such war was too high a price to be paid for freedom. But in recent years a new generation has grown up for whom the civil war is no more than a distant historical event. The second factor inhibiting the revolutionary movement was prosperity. During the

* "The Fall of Europe?," COMMENTARY, January 1972.

† Most Western left-wing literature is freely circulated in Spain; only domestic dissidents are muzzled.

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last decade Spain went through a period of unprecedented economic expansion, partly through the phenomenal growth of tourism and partly through foreign investments. These provided a great boost to Spanish industry and also had a major impact on agriculture. Per-capita income increased sixfold from 1959 to 1973, from $250 to $1500; Spain is now tenth in the world's list of holders of gold and currency reserves. The standard of living of the working class has gone up substantially, and a new middle class has grown in size, wealth, and influence. At present the boom is fizzling, inflation is running at 16 per cent, and the latent political and social tensions are surfacing with a vengeance. If the Spanish opposition is strong, it is far from united; even among Communists there has been bitter infighting. The Right, on the other hand, is much more firmly entrenched than in Portugal; it will not surrender its positions without a struggle. Part of Spain's tragedy is that the vital center is still missing. Political change will thus in all probability be far more bloody than in Portugal, and the outcome is uncertain.

At the other end of the Mediterranean, Greece is about to enter another phase in its troubled postwar history. It is now seven years since the army took over; while the going was good, General Papadopoulos would probably have won free elections hands down. The old parliamentary regime was discredited and the generals seemed to be delivering what they had promised—order and prosperity. For several years the Greek economy developed by leaps and bounds at a rate almost unprecedented in Europe. But gradually, the Greeks became disillusioned, the lack of political freedom was palpably felt, and as in Spain, the boom came to a sudden halt. Living costs in Greece last year went up by 34 per cent, one of the highest jumps in Europe. Greece's present rulers, Generals Ghizikis and Ioannides, have revealed anything but the self-confidence of Papadopoulos, their predecessor. They have become involved in a stupid and quite unnecessary quarrel with Turkey over the oil fields in the Aegean Sea, and they have engaged in a flirtation with Colonel Qaddafi—as if he could be of any help to them. Only the proverbial spark is needed to set off an explosion; it could be another students' revolt or a coup involving the army. Greece, like Spain, once went through a bloody and protracted civil war, but passions have not died down and the country is still deeply divided internally. Most democratic leaders are in exile or have had to give up politics because of their opposition to the regime. But it is doubtful that the democratic leadership will benefit from the overthrow of the generals and colonels. Most of them belong to the older generation and to discredited parties; they would probably be pushed aside by a new popular front headed by someone like Andreas Papandreou, whose personal ambitions and lack of scruples are in inverse ratio to his democratic convictions. While the present regime in Greece has nothing to recommend it and in any case seems doomed, there is no ground for optimism about its likely successor.

WHATEVER happens in Spain or Greece, it is unlikely to shake the foundations of Europe; events in Italy, on the other hand, could cause a major earthquake. Italy has survived a condition of semi-anarchy for many years, and its infinite capacity for adjusting to this way of life has convinced some foreign observers that such a state of affairs could go on forever. But the latent malaise has become acute as a result of the economic crisis. Earlier this year the Rome statistical office announced that the GNP had risen 6 per cent in 1973 in real terms and consumption had gone up at the same rate: not spectacular progress, perhaps, but nothing to be alarmed about. Then, almost overnight, it was made known that Italy faced an $8 billion balance-of-trade deficit, that the lira had to be devalued, that inflation was galloping on at 40 per cent, and that price controls and the most stringent import restrictions had to be introduced (in contravention to EEC regulations) to keep the country afloat. More recent figures are not available since the Rome statistical office, like many other Italian ministries, has been on strike.

These economic misfortunes would not be fatal *per se*—England is saddled with an even bigger trade deficit this year—but they have coincided with something much deeper. Basically, it is the Italian failure, even after a century, to make one country out of two—the North and the South—which are different in almost every respect. In the past two decades, the Italian government has invested some $40 billion in the South, but to no avail: the South is a bottomless pit. But it is quite mistaken to think of the Southerners as only the miserable slum dwellers of Milan and Turin. Seventeen million of them have migrated over the decades to the North, and they now dominate whole sections of the state administration, including ministries such as Justice and Police (capable young Northerners usually prefer careers in business or the academic world). The Southerners are largely responsible for the paralysis of the central government, for bureaucratic mismanagement and corruption.

The Italian crisis has other facets too: the tendency of Italy's rich to invest their money in speculative building deals (or to smuggle it out of the country), the dissatisfaction of the working class (particularly younger workers), the unwillingness of the clergy to surrender any position, the hopeless division within Italy's leading party which is split into about a dozen different factions (*correnti*). Against this background there

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emerges a picture of fear, resignation, and hopelessness.

The Italian problem could be solved by dividing the country into two, with the border running somewhere south of Rome. Another possibility is the reorganization of Italian political life on a regional basis with a reduction in the role of the central government and the state bureaucracy. But these are remote possibilities. A coup from the Right by Almirante's Neo-Fascists in collaboration with sections of the armed forces and the Carabinieri is no longer ruled out, at least in the South, though it would stand little chance in the industrial and predominantly left-wing North. The other possibility is a left-wing coup, but the Italian Communists have not been in a hurry: why take risks, if sooner or later they will be asked to come to the rescue anyway? For the Italian CP is one of the abler and more enlightened Communist parties; it has shown some ability on the municipal level and a growing number of left-wing Christian Democrats have reluctantly accepted the fact that to prevent a total collapse they may have to look to support from the Communists. The Italian Communists are pro-European and the establishment of Soviet military bases in their country is not one of their top priorities; but neither is staying in NATO. An Italian popular front would be a giant step toward the neutralization of Europe.

But why fear a neutral Europe? Would it not in many ways be a fitting solution for the problems of the old continent? The trouble is that neutrality, to be credible, has to be defended, and this Europe is not in a position to do. A strong Europe could be neutral, whereas a weak Europe would be drawn, sooner or later, wholly or partly, into the Soviet sphere of influence. The Soviet leaders are well aware of all this. Ponomarenko, a member of the Politburo, talked in his Lenin anniversary speech this year about an impending revolutionary transformation in one capitalist country or another—there is no reason to assume that he meant the United States. General Maltsev, writing in *Krasnaia Zvezda*, expects "at any moment" a fundamental revolutionary transformation in some link of the "capitalist system"; to be prepared for the opportunity this presents, he argues, the Soviet Union must strengthen its military potential. Thus Maltsev too sees a turning point in world affairs, but it is not quite identical with the *pacem-in-terris* interpretation of some Western observers.

Yugoslavia's fate after Tito has preoccupied Western governments for several years, but this is one of the crises that may never break. In the last two years Yugoslavia has suppressed internal dissent, moved somewhat closer to Moscow, and renewed the old quarrel with Italy over Trieste. While there still is some talk in Belgrade about nonalignment, it has become largely empty. This policy may or may not save Yugoslavia, it may or may not make Soviet intervention unnecessary. There is nothing the West could or would do if the Russians ever decided to take full control of a country which, they believe, rightfully belongs to their sphere of interest.

Of the major European countries, West Germany will muddle through, though not without such anxieties over the survival of democracy as Willy Brandt is said to have expressed before his recent resignation. Britain will also muddle through, totally absorbed with Ulster (assuming it remains part of the United Kingdom), the timing of tea-breaks, and the strikes of boilermakers and footplate men. The North Sea bonanza seems to be in reach; with a determined effort these oilfields could be in full use by the end of the decade. But such an effort seems at best uncertain in the present-day British climate. In the meantime, living standards are likely to sink to somewhere between those of Italy and Spain.

As for France, commenting on the results of the recent elections, a *Newsweek* correspondent had a glowing vision: the youthful new President of France would be able to do for his nation what Kennedy did for the United States—"make it once more a glamorous, lively, youth-oriented country, brimming with ideas and innovation." Alas, a few months hence, Giscard d'Estaing will be fighting for the survival of the regime and there will be nothing glamorous in this struggle. He would in all probability not have become President had Pompidou died six months later, for by this fall France will feel the full impact of the economic crisis. Unpopular measures will have to be taken to cope with the emergency, and since the country is deeply split right down the middle, there will be growing unrest and mass strikes. Giscard is a gentleman, a competent finance minister, and an adequate soccer player, but more than public relations and economic expertise will be needed to steer France through the coming years.

IV

YESTERDAY'S predictions about the coming of a golden age, of a new era of peace, prosperity, moderation, and great common endeavors, make strange reading in the light of recent events. But since in politics almost anything is *a priori* possible, the predictions of a global crisis must be made with the usual reservations. A sudden change in the relationships between the superpowers—be it America and Russia, or Russia and China—could transform the world scene overnight (though not necessarily for the better). Sudden scientific and technological breakthroughs could settle the fuel crisis and the other shortages within the next few years. The Soviet leaders could give up Leninism; there

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could be an Arab Marshall Plan or a Point Four program sponsored by the oil producers. The nations of the world could get together and resolve, in a spirit of unprecedented good will, altruism, and self sacrifice, to tackle the problems facing mankind—the "great disorder under heaven," as the Chinese call it in their old-fashioned way. All this is possible and it would, of course, forestall a world economic crisis such as has been outlined. But it is more likely that the nations will go on acting as they have been acting, each pursuing its own interests in its own way.

The Soviet Union could only benefit from a breakdown, partial or total, in Western Europe, whereas a collapse in Southeast Asia would certainly not be in its best interests. America, on the other hand, has a vital stake in European stability, whereas a major crisis on the Indian subcontinent, whatever its outcome, would affect American interests only marginally. It could be argued, indeed, that American policy should aim at making the Russians assume responsibility for the well-being of the Indian subcontinent. This would be only proper in view of the strong political position established by the Russians in those parts and the pro-Soviet orientation of the Indian government. An American policy of masterly inactivity would be bitterly attacked at home as immoral and Machiavellian—and this despite the fact that it would be the most effective way to establish a real détente. For if the Russians were forced to face their responsibilities on the Indian subcontinent, their capacity to cause mischief in other parts of the globe would be very much limited for many years to come.

It is quite unrealistic to expect the United Nations, the World Bank, OECD, or the International Monetary Fund to take effective action at this stage to combat world inflation, to solve the problem of raw materials, and to cope with the emergency facing the have-not nations. There will be earnest statements of intent, but little else. The natural inclination of governments at a time of crisis is to be guided by national egoism, to adopt protectionist measures—in short, to pursue a beggar-my-neighbor policy. All past experience has shown that such measures do not work; the only predictable outcome is a rapid decline in world trade and a further drop in real income in many countries. Not all the old mistakes will be repeated; a new edition of the Smoot-Hawley Act of 1931 to protect American farmers against foreign competition is ruled out for obvious reasons. But effective cooperation between the industrial nations of the West cannot be expected until palliative measures like import restrictions have failed and the situation has become so desperate that the governments will be driven to act together by the sheer instinct for survival. Yet even such action will require a long time to become effective: it is easy to cause a collapse in world markets, but it took more than a thousand meetings of the Kennedy round in the early 60's for agreement to be reached on the reduction of import duties. And agreement and concerted action will be even more difficult this time than in the early 1930's. For the world economic crisis of that period mainly involved the industrialized nations, whereas the coming crisis also embraces the conflicting interests between the producers of raw materials and the main consumer nations.

The crisis could be mitigated or at the very least delayed by a general decline in the prices of raw materials and if inflation does not become worse. We have already noted a fall in the price of wheat which will make a considerable difference to the food-importing countries. The price of copper and other metals came down by 20 per cent or more last May and the bottom has not yet been reached. But such are the complexities of the world economy that too sudden and total a collapse on the commodity markets would itself cause a crisis (as indeed happened in 1930-32). It is virtually certain that the Middle East oil producers, for political rather than economic reasons, will make use of the enormous funds they have accumulated to bribe some countries, invest in others, and extend first-aid in yet other parts of the world. It is equally certain that the governments of the West will eventually get together and take action. But one fears that it will be too little and too late to prevent the political convulsions which could be triggered off by a major economic crisis.

THE last world economic crisis witnessed the advent to power of fascism in Central Europe. While history, as first-year students are taught, does not repeat itself, it is highly probable that compared with the shape of things to come, the 1950's and 60's will appear in retrospect a calm, peaceful, and relatively happy period in the history of mankind. The survival of parliamentary democracy will be in doubt in all but a few countries—and there are not that many free countries left even now.

As for the two superpowers, they are both in a favorable position to cope with the crisis (and China will hardly be affected). Americans, like most human beings, tend to regard their own problems as the worst possible, but in comparison with those facing other countries, they appear almost insignificant in scope. Despite Watergate, despite inflation, despite all its other internal problems, the United States is strong; it does not depend on the help of others, its economy will not collapse, and it has enough military power to defend its interests. True, Mr. Kissinger is not to be envied, and his successor even less. American foreign policy is geared at present to dealing with one crisis at a time; soon it will have to cope with half a dozen, and people will think back with

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wonder and nostalgia to the days when the Secretary of State could afford to absent himself from Washington for five weeks, shuttling between two foreign countries in an attempt to solve a mere regional dispute.

The Soviet Union is also well placed to cope with the crisis. It will try to expand its spheres of influence in Europe, the Middle East, and possibly also in Southeast Asia. Communist regimes may emerge in a few more countries, though this will not necessarily strengthen the cohesion of the Soviet camp. The general political trend will be toward authoritarian regimes and dictatorships, nationalist-populist in inspiration. There may be coups and counter-coups in rapid succession, and some regions may go through long periods of chaos. No crisis lasts forever and eventually a new equilibrium will emerge. Similarly with détente, the prospects for which are less than brilliant in the circumstances. For the essence of Soviet policy will not consist in refraining from seizing an advantage over the United States wherever possible, as stated in the Nixon-Brezhnev accord, but exactly the opposite. True, even a breakdown in détente will be followed by more détente, détente without illusions, shorn of the misleading rhetoric: in brief, a control system to prevent major wars.

WHAT will the new international system be like? If we are indeed in the first stages of a world crisis, it is clearly premature to speculate about its duration and about the new order likely to emerge thereafter. Perhaps the crisis will be less severe than feared and its political repercussions less far-reaching Perhaps seemingly insoluble problems will give way to human effort and ingenuity. Perhaps the developments sketched in this article will take years rather than months to mature. In economic storms, it has been noted, the time lag between lightning and thunder is often quite long. To which it should be added that there is a further time lag between economic lightning and political thunder. Once the thunder has struck, however, the time for installing lightning rods will have passed.

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Notes on American Innocence

Lev Navrozov

THE first American I met outside was a professor of sociology with whom I struck up a conversation on a Roman streetcar—we lived in Rome while waiting for our American visas. "What country are you going to now?" he asked. I told him. "But I don't understand," he said very softly, as a gentleman should, so as to show that his interlocutor's opinion or action is not necessarily absurd but only seems so, or at any rate that he fails to understand it. "I don't understand. Out of Russia into the United States. Out of the frying pan into the fire, so to speak."

A few days ago I was riding in the New York subway and when it emerged from underground I saw a group of old red-brick houses. When one is very young and happy, or happily drunk, the scene he contemplates can blur and quiver like a landscape on a hot summer morning: between the scene and his eye there seems to hover a certain transparent tremulous liquid of joy. This is how I saw those apartment houses. Then suddenly I had a flicker of sobriety: I *saw* ordinary apartment buildings. Perhaps ordinary people lived there. Perhaps they were bored, despondent, miserable. There may have been dust on the window sills. But it was just a flicker. This was the United States. I know that life is tragic. But on the whole this was the United States, and those apartment houses were part of the United States. I saw them again through the transparent liquid of joy.

This was just a few days ago, when I had already become relatively calm and sedate in my marriage to freedom. While in Rome I was in the first raptures of bliss, and the professor of sociology was my first live American. Even if he had started metallically reciting *The Communist Manifesto* or *Mein Kampf*, I would have found it only another iridescent sparkle of the many-faceted diamond of freedom, and him an entirely charming scholar and gentleman of the Western world. Besides, I felt that I was to blame. I had made a tactless error. He was a political refugee, fleeing the U.S., and here I blurted out that I was bound *for* the U.S. (True, if the U.S. was so bad, it was not quite clear why Italy was so much better.) Yet at his words I evidently could not control my facial muscles, because he muttered, rather hurriedly, with a little smile, partly compassionate, partly whimsical: "Excuse me, of course. . . ." He was a wizened savant with a kind, sensitive, delicate face.

Not that I was altogether unprepared, intellectually. In the latest edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* I had seen in Russia, the entry under "Torture" was devoted almost exclusively to Western Europe; for modern developments in the field it referred the reader to the article "Third Degree," devoted, predictably, to the United States. Perhaps it was an act of generous tolerance on the part of the professor of sociology to concede even the frying-pan-fire symmetry of the situation. At any rate, according to the 1970 *Britannica* the professor of sociology was the one escaping from a society of torture or at least third degree, while I had simply had the faddish desire to leave (again according to the relevant *Britannica* articles) a well-organized and well-run welfare state.

"Nothing seems to have changed in twenty-five centuries," I said "Plato received at birth the right to live on what was a rare, miraculous, and transient island of light, as compared with the dark millennia of ruthless gang war before that island appeared and after it was engulfed again in night all around. He took the comparative brightness of Athens for granted, his eyes were so accommodated to the light he did not even notice it—he was perhaps bored with it as one is bored with inherited wealth. Instead he constructed in his mind a society that was crude, absurd, inhuman, and anyway impracticable, but which seemed to him the purest realization of the highest intelligence on earth. The most lasting tragic impression of his life was the death of Socrates. Socrates might easily have evaded the death sentence but he would not; he might have fled but would not hear of it, preferring to drink the hemlock—in front of his admirers, a month after being sentenced, and hence with a lot of publicity, to use a modern word. Obviously, Plato (or Socrates) could not have imagined, even if

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he had wanted to, that the whole point of this tragedy would be lost in, say, China where four hundred thousand anonymous humans who did not want to be heroes or stoics or saints or suicides were anyway beheaded one fine day in a scarcely recorded little mishap (which the 1970 *Britannica* and some American histories do not even mention in their description of the wonderful achievements of the age of Ch'in—evidently in order not to revive the cold war). And perhaps those four hundred thousand thought themselves lucky to have died so pleasantly, without any torture to speak of."

As I got off, stepping into Europe, into Rome, into a cathedral square shaded by ancient trees, the scholar said with a kind of elation: "We talked about Plato on an Italian streetcar!"

But why, indeed, the United States?

I had received from my environment several anti-American biases. One was imparted by Soviet propaganda, and was the easiest of all to overcome. "Crime—gangsters—all Americans are either criminals or victims, while in our country there is practically no crime though our country is even bigger than the U.S." No crime at all? "Well, there is only one case of murder in a whole week for a whole district!" a district prosecutor told me confidentially with pride in 1956. I multiplied his "only one case" by the number of weeks and districts, and the figure turned out to be only 25 times as high as the number of all cases of murder and non-negligent manslaughter for the U.S. as of 1956. The omnipotence of the superstate which can kill off any number of its subjects with impunity does not exclude a fantastically high if secret rate of "private" crime as well, compared with a democracy. This was just my first attempt at comparative research, entirely within the realm of elementary-school arithmetic; I wish intellectuals, statesmen, and experts of all kinds would similarly make use of the multiplication tables before they speak of the "virtual absence" of crime or unemployment or other statistical evils in non-democracies.

The anti-American bias of Soviet propaganda was an easy target to demolish. But what lay *under* Soviet propaganda was the anti-American bias, really a double bias, inherited from pre-1917 Russian culture. One fold of the double bias a biased Russian shares with biased West Europeans, the other is the old Russian phobia of the "soulless West." In other words, a biased Russian dislikes America just as a biased Western European does, and dislikes both Western Europe *and* America because both represent the West, America more so than Europe. There is no way to overcome this double bias (or any such bias) completely. For over twenty years now I have studied the English-speaking civilization. And yet I will never be able to understand one English word—say, the word "life"—as I understand its supposed equivalent in Russian. One cannot bridge the gap. One's own "life" and the "life" of his cultural group will always seem to him more "lifelike" than the "life" of another group. One can only realize that the fault lies with one's own limited imagination and sympathy, not with the reality on the other side of the gap. As soon as I realized that, the double bias was as good as overcome.

Meanwhile, something else had been brewing in the privacy of my mind. The word "democracy," which in its modern meaning went into wide circulation only in the past century, seemed to me a misnomer for what it described. In 19th-century England the problem was political: how to extend the vote to the "*demos*," and hence the entire social fabric came to be called a "democracy"; such longstanding features of English society as trial by jury, *habeas corpus*, etc. were not at issue, and were therefore somehow taken for granted, assumed to be not so much a part of what was meant by democracy as intrinsic to "civilization" itself and as originating spontaneously in any society like hygienic habits or the ability to read and write. The vestiges of this attitude are very much alive today, as for instance when it is said that the Allende government in Chile was established "by due democratic process," the implication being that the result was a democratic society. It is discreetly forgotten that the Hitler government was established in Germany in a similarly democratic way, by an even larger proportion of the voting "*demos*."

Naturally, as soon as the whole population of a country receives the right to vote, the majority may elect a government which will fleece (and why not kill?) a given minority, for surely a majority voter is entitled to do whatever he pleases to a minority voter: is not democracy the rule of a majority? In other words, one recent aspect of democracy, its majoritarian principle of political power, destroys in such cases the whole fabric of democracy as a civic system for the defense of individual liberties, a system that took England about a thousand years to develop. In the United States, on the other hand, it seemed to me that a society had emerged in which (for the first time in history) the principle of majority rule did not clash so drastically with the need to protect individual rights, because the majority wanted, as I saw it, to *make* values, not to obtain them by fleecing a minority.

Another weakness of democracy to my mind was its inability to defend itself against war machines like Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia. The growing military strength of such a machine was independent of the wills of its constituent human cogs, while in a democracy the citizens themselves had to give away, for their defense, their money and blood, of their own free will. In the 30's the Continental European democracies demonstrated that they were not viable when confronted with

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a war machine. The case of England was less clear, owing to the Channel, while the safety of the United States was not directly involved at all, owing to the Atlantic.

However, I developed a purely theoretical concept in which each democracy (or, indeed, each social group) had a certain "average civic index." Thus, Russia between February and October of 1917 had all the democratic freedoms the U.S. has today, but the average civic index of the former was low, while that of the latter was high and is still higher today; other societies were grouped between these two points on my civic-index scale.

Indeed, the survival of democracy became a kind of religion with me. Life inside a regime like post-1917 Russia has led some people to complete social detachment, mystic and/or cynical, and others to the worship of "Old Russia" in the mid-19th-century spirit; me it led, after the Hungarian revolt of 1956, to an inner need to believe in the survival of democracy, and the United States incarnated for me the hope of such a survival.

Soon after my arrival in New York (my private Mecca) it became clear that my chance meeting with the professor of sociology in Rome had somehow been significant. I found, strangely admixed with the intoxicating oxygen of freedom, something which I may call "innocence."

Dostoevsky once wondered why a convict at hard labor who was considered the most dangerous man in the prison camp seemed so deeply devoted to him. The criminal told him: "You are so simple that one cannot help feeling sorry for you. . . ." This hardened man of the underworld, for whom Dostoevsky, the product of a safe, prosperous, humane milieu, was so "simple," undertook to shelter him against the devious, cunning, evil world. I felt somewhat like that criminal, that man of the underworld. I saw innocence everywhere. I was in a society made up mostly of children, an experience at once moving and pleasant and pathetic and frightening and amusing. Some seemed to me childlike in their forthrightness, candor, honesty, beaming good will; but at the other end of the spectrum there was a childish (rather than childlike) ignorance of other modes of life, an egocentric and often petulant preoccupation with the self and with the sheltered, safe, cozy ambience of daily life, a preoccupation that betrayed itself whenever that ambience was the least bit threatened. A debate over whether a neighborhood vacant lot should be a children's playground or a dog-run, for instance, became a global cataclysm: according to the New York *Times* the dog-run advocates broke up a meeting of the playground champions with a rousing battle cry: "Fascists!" This, I thought, is how children play at war; for them World War II is only a distant, insignificant, boring abstraction, while the all-important reality is their play in which they shout "Fascist!" or "Commie!" at one another.

Quite a few Americans evidently believe that some local happening in which they are engaged to the exclusion of everything else is of absorbing interest and crucial importance to all mankind, while the rest of the world exists simply to provide symbols for these local happenings. When in the spring of 1972 the price of meat in New York increased by as much as six cents a week, the *Times* published an article (April 27, 1973) describing how Soviet Russia reacted to news of this catastrophe and of the resulting nationwide boycott of meat. To give the local background the article showed that meat prices in the Soviet Union are about the same as in the U.S. Now, no *Times* correspondent or any other foreign correspondent active today has ever been "in the Soviet Union": he has only been at special foreign exhibitions like the one labeled "Moscow" (the sociology of such "live exhibitions" is beyond my scope here). If a foreign correspondent had ever been "in the Soviet Union," he would know that "meat departments" at stores for the common or non-exhibitory population have been out of existence for about forty-five years. Not to mention the fact that Moscow "prices," usually reported by the *Times* correspondent in dollars, are purely imaginary, since the exchange rate itself has been purely imaginary since the early 30's. Actually, quite an ordinary doctor or lawyer in the U.S. can afford up to one hundred times more meat than his "counterpart" at the foreign exhibition called Moscow. (Evidently, the *Times* expected a Muscovite, privileged enough to live at an exhibition, to forget this trifling ratio, while appreciating that a six-cent rise in meat prices in the U.S. was a global disaster that was nevertheless being bravely met by an all-out national campaign.)

Not that the regime I left is exceptionally evil. On the contrary, it is quite ordinary: this is how mankind has mainly lived for as long as recorded history goes, with some little and often secret mishaps like the Great Burning of Books, Collectivization, or the Purification of the German Race. Mankind has lived mainly in the underworld, and its history is mostly one of gang war: conquests from within or from without, exterminations, creedal persecutions, etc. It is the civilization in which I *arrived* that constitutes the rare exception, a bold pioneer effort, a thrilling and precarious experiment. Democracy is by definition vulnerable, on account of its humanism. To be sure, given a high "average civic index," a democracy like the U.S. has its strong points in the global struggle for survival, while war machines like Russia have their weaknesses. But as I came into actual contact with the U.S., it was the aspect of vulnerability that smote me with immediacy, and it is on this I wish to concentrate

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here. Democracy is a sheltered, humane, prosperous family. Can its children defend it against the underworld?

An outsider like myself soon finds that many Americans who received democracy by right of birth do not realize that their inheritance has originated "just now," if measured on the scale of history, and has survived so far owing perhaps to a fortuitous concurrence of circumstances, one of which is the Atlantic Ocean. Rather, like Plato about twenty-five centuries ago, they take their society for granted. To some it is a perfectly ordinary society, which always existed and always will exist, like the air they breathe. (Actually, some of them are gravely concerned with the air; a young neighbor of ours, aged eleven, asked how we could have left pollution-free Russia for pollution-ridden America.) To others, the society into which they were born is worse than ordinary, it may even be so far worse as to be "fascist." When I hear the word "fascism" in this context I beg to recall that even in Italy between 1922 and 1943 there were three periods of fascism, all different and all incomparably milder than even the blessed period of 1922 to 1926 in Russia. Which fascism do they have specifically in mind? Perhaps that situation in which a children's playground is planned on a vacant lot instead of a dog-run.

The controlling attitude seems to be one of make-believe. No matter how fervently Americans and West Europeans toyed between 1936 and 1956 with the idea that the Soviet Union was the "world's only genuine democracy," they never exposed *themselves* to the happy privilege of becoming its citizens, and even when (like Anna Louise Strong) they lived of their free will within it, they secretly clung to their American passports anent the day of *real,* not make-believe, danger (for it was her secretly-cherished American passport that finally saved Mrs. Strong-Shubin).

True, the populace of post-1917 Russia is even worse informed about the U.S. than the American populace is about post-1917 Russia. But the populace of post-1917 Russia is *supposed* to be as ignorant in this respect as possible. What is translated in the West by the word "newspaper" (such as *Pravda*) is not a newspaper. Only the upper castes are to read real newspapers like the *Blue Tass,* each successive higher caste reading its own, more complete, and more secret newspaper, so that only those at the very top are omniscient, for they make all the decisions, while the common populace is fed on daily, monthly, or sporadic myths, since the function of the common populace is to comply with the decisions of the omniscient center no matter what that is.

The populace of a democracy (to repeat a truism) elects its decision-makers and hence participates in the decision-making, apart from watching it, criticizing, protesting, etc. Naturally, there are more sophisticated students of mankind in the West than in Russia today: creative freedom, even as it existed in pre-1861 Russia for the nobility, is a stimulating ambience. Besides, vast-scale education undertaken in a free society for the first time in human history is a powerful quantitative and hence qualitative factor in the development of intellect. Certainly, one might permit oneself to hope, intellect can rise above sheer empirical experience. A gentle, kind, polite criminologist can know the criminal world better than its most experienced denizen. Dostoevsky, the childlike, understood and predicted the destiny of all those hard, cunning, ruthless "greats" in Russia of 1917 to 1938. A mild, sensitive, compassionate man like George Orwell understood the psychology of certain societies in which he never lived better than the "creators" of those societies. But the Englishman George Orwell was not an adviser to the President of the United States, as he ought to have been: he was an author who had difficulties even in publishing his books after 1937. Instead, the President of the world's strongest democracy between 1933 and 1945 had Joseph Davies as his adviser. As ambassador in Moscow Davies noticed in 1937 that he was being shadowed by the Soviet secret police, and in his confidential reports to the President and his diary excerpts he expressed his delight with these people—they were taking such pains for the sake of his safety! This is the innocence of a baby: even a sheltered child is usually shrewder than this.

A free, sheltered, prosperous society enables Orwells to develop to their full intellectual stature; but it also reduces the less endowed to a kind of babyhood in everything outside their professional occupation (Joseph Davies was a lawyer). Unfortunately it is mostly the Davieses rather than the Orwells who have been appointed by democratic electorates to shape the behavior of their countries toward the underworld.

In the 19th century, it may be, electorates could afford the luxury of not knowing societies different from their own and of electing statesmen who hardly knew anything about them either. A statesman was to be creative and useful inside the democracy, not globally. Today such a condition can be fatal. The U.S. occupies less than 1/50 of the global surface: the other 49/50, including the oceans, are war zones or may be converted into such; likewise the space above the U.S. Of course, the electorate can pretend that these war zones and the vast war civilizations reclaiming them do not exist as autonomous realities, that this is still the 19th century, and can keep electing statesmen who will bring low meat (or gasoline) prices on their cozy little island while remaining as innocent of the outside world as their electorate is or as their predecessors were. But this attitude will one day exact its price.

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American innocence seems to spring from a variety of motives, some of them willed. Soon after my arrival an American friend invited me to meet at his home the editor of an influential magazine. To ask my host beforehand whether it was a "left-wing" or "right-wing" magazine seemed to me as absurd as to ask whether his guest was a Monophysite or a Dyophysite so that in conversation I might avoid saying Homoiousian instead of Homoousian. After all, I had upheld my inward intellectual freedom under the ubiquitous pressure of Stalin's regime; surely I would not be inhibited, swayed, or censored in the U.S. by what some "wing" might think of what I said. Vietnam was the topic. I proposed to the editor an article on the "macro-sociology" of North Vietnam: for example, torture as a modern industry like dry cleaning or army field medicine. I had met the North Vietnamese and elicited from them quite a lot; they had told me things they would not tell a Westerner. Besides, my life in a not altogether dissimilar regime had sharpened certain sensibilities a Westerner might be lacking. The educational television station in New York had just broadcast several programs on Vietnam. A youngish American named Tom Hayden had posed as an old Vietnamese and explained "Vietnamese culture." Newspaper and magazine articles on North Vietnam and the Vietcong seemed to me for the most part as naive, phony, and smug as the worst "reports from Soviet Russia" that appeared in the U.S. between 1918 and 1956. I felt I could contribute something better.

I did not notice the ice in his voice when he said, "There are few people in the U.S. who think the way you think." I mistook this for a highly encouraging compliment: surely he did not want me to think the way his readers think and tell them what they already knew. I continued to explain how new, informative, or at least intellectually refreshing such an article might be, giving a fresh angle to a topic bogged in clichés.

"The American involvement in Vietnam is immoral," he said, and with an I-have-never-been-so-insulted-in-my-life expression on his face.

"The American involvement as it has been conducted shows an ignorance of how societies like North Vietnam can wage wars of conquest that a democracy cannot repulse," I rejoined. "But who is to blame? If you refuse to know more about societies like North Vietnam even now, in the 70's, whom can you blame for ignorance in the 60's? And how can you presume to judge what is moral or immoral in a conflict if you do not know—indeed, refuse to know—its protagonists? If you have practically lost a war against North Vietnam through your ignorance of the country, how will you defend yourselves against the other and larger North Vietnams all over the globe?"

The climax was reached when the editor said: "If you start like this in this country, I am afraid you won't sell one copy of your book."

"When Stalin was alive," I said, "I had the impression sometimes that I was in a minority of one against mankind. Perhaps it will be the same now. Perhaps I'm just that way. But surely democracy is for minorities, too, not only for majorities. And some of my friends will certainly buy my book if only to please me."

He laughed—very good-naturedly; I had evidently inscribed myself into the right niche in his inner world.

RESISTANCE to knowledge of the outside world has formed itself into a cozy idea of cultural multipolarity according to which democracy is part of American or West European (or Japanese?) culture, but no part of, for example, Russian or South Vietnamese culture. It is therefore silly to expect or to defend democracy in South Vietnam (or wherever) because that would mean imposing American culture on an entirely different environment. (One wonders if those who advance this argument would also apply it retroactively to the American Civil War, when it was believed that former Africans were as capable of democratic development as the Founding Fathers.) Aiding South Vietnam was not only useless but indeed harmful: those South Vietnamese would never understand what democracy is even *for*.

Those who live in bright sunlight often perceive twilight as uniform unrelieved darkness. A New York *Times* correspondent in South Vietnam, en route to showing that it would be all the same to the people of South Vietnam if a Communist regime were imposed, pointed out the abject poverty of the country: "Long lines form at the gas stations daily" (December 29, 1973). In a Soviet reader, this *Times* dispatch would evoke the same sort of laughter as the story about the English duchess who exclaimed upon hearing of a family in which the butler served the same napkins at breakfast and dinner: "I never knew such poverty existed." Similarly, an article about the lack of freedom in South Vietnam (September 15, 1973) would dumbfound the average Soviet reader, who on the contrary would be impressed with the civic progress of South Vietnam as compared with his own regime. Those who have lived all their lives in utter darkness can distinguish very well among degrees of twilight.

A professor of political science at a prestigious New York college whom I met the other day developed the idea of cultural multipolarity to a high degree of art. Speaking in perfectly rounded, sonorous sentences, he defined me as a fascist before I had said anything, and then explained that I could not be anything else because I was from Russia and hence brought with me, con-

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sciously or unconsciously, the totalitarian mentality. In other words, democracy comes only from democracy, and fascism from fascism—just as true culture was once thought by Germans to emanate only from Germans. In line with this way of thinking, a strong campaign has been waged in the U.S. to stop the operation of an American radio station broadcasting to Russia since, according to the logic of cultural multipolarity, it is useless and even harmful to propound or explain democracy to "Russians" (that is, to more than a hundred nations of Russia, including Jews), for it amounts to imposing on them an alien American culture. This kind of racism, under the cover of broadminded tolerance, easily combines with the view that there is no democracy in the U.S. either—only fascism. The fusion between the two views was summed up for me by a post-graduate student in this way: "If there is no democracy here, what can you expect from the Vietnamese?" Tactfully, he did not say: "the Russians."

Wilfully or spontaneously ignorant of societies different from their own, the peoples of democracies have been electing statesmen who, together with the experts and subordinates they choose, have been helpless in dealing with outside societies they do not understand and indeed are not expected to understand. Even Winston Churchill, one of the few exceptions, rather proves the rule. Here is Churchill speaking in the House of Commons in 1945 as Stalin was preparing to grab half of Europe:

> Marshal Stalin and the Soviet leaders wish to live in honorable friendship and equity with the Western democracies. . . . I feel also that their word is their bond. I know of no government which stands to its obligations, even in its own despite, more solidly than the Russian Soviet government. I decline absolutely to embark here on a discussion about Russian good faith.

It may be said that Churchill's speech was just a piece of diplomatic flattery intended to preserve the "détente" of that time. But a eulogy to Stalin is also included in *The Hinge of Fate*, Churchill's memoirs, published in 1950 when there was hardly a need for further diplomatic pretense.

Even so tough-minded and unblinkered a figure as Golda Meir may be cited as a particularly painful instance of this rule. Mrs. Meir, then her country's ambassador to the Soviet Union, was asked by Stalin in 1948-49 to draw up a list of all those Soviet Jews who wished to volunteer to serve in the Israeli War of Independence. A Soviet-Jewish volunteer army, so to speak. Mrs. Meir complied, and Stalin duly handed the lists over to his secret police, who arrested the proposed volunteer army and sent the volunteers off to concentration camps for extermination by hunger, labor, and frost.

Many Western statesmen, diplomats, and experts are lawyers, and they actually imagine that societies inside which not a single law has ever been observed behave like parties to a legal dispute. Let us sign agreements with them, they propose. True, the rulers of post-1917 Russia have broken a thousand such agreements already, but why not sign another thousand? Other statesmen, cannier perhaps, are aware of the worthlessness of such documents but go along with them anyway, in order to impress the American electorate. Thus, when in 1933 a certain segment of the American public insisted that the "détente" of that time, in particular U.S. diplomatic recognition of post-1917 Russia, should be accompanied by a show of good will by the other side as well —that Soviet society should become more open and that in particular the Soviets should cease arresting Americans who tried to learn something about the country—President Roosevelt asked the Soviet Foreign Minister, Maxim Litvinov, to sign "assurances" of the "legal protection of Americans in Russia," their "right to seek information on economic conditions in Russia," etc. Litvinov complied with gusto, since he knew that the "assurances" were so much paper. Mr. George F. Kennan, one of the few alert and mature young State Department officials of the time—at least according to his memoirs—warned the President as much:

> FDR nevertheless recognized that these clauses had all the outward aspects of carefully worked-out technical-legal documents, and he correctly calculated that in a country where foreign affairs are customarily the province of lawyers, people would be impressed and reassured by them. He was interested only in their momentary psychological effect on the American public, not in their effectiveness in practice.

If there is a tendency to project a legal imagery on the Soviet Union and on other totalitarian powers, there is another tendency to visualize them as "trade partners" who will become friendly to the West through the exercise of normal economic relations. This tendency was eloquently epitomized by Lloyd George in Parliament on February 10, 1922:

> I believe we can save her [Russia] by trade. Commerce has a sobering influence. . . . Trade, in my opinion, will bring an end to the ferocity, the rapine, and the crudity of Bolshevism surer than any other method.

And a third tendency is to project an image of the totalitarian powers as "neighbors," on the good old American premise that if *you* are a good, smiling, friendly person, your neighbor, even if he is an unknown war machine extending from Cuba to Vietnam, is sure to respond in kind and join with you in building a "permanent structure of peace."

All these images fuse admirably in the image of

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détente. The first détente with Soviet Russia was achieved by Lloyd George in 1921-22, and since then Western statesmen have repeated the feat many times. It is indeed none too difficult to pull off. A statesman has only to make concessions to the sovereigns of unknown civilizations in exchange for "momentary psychological effects" meant to impress his own electorate. Then if grace suddenly turns into displeasure (cold war), a new statesman makes a round of new concessions, and the cycle starts all over again. But this is not mere repetition. Even a cursory glance at the détente-cold-war cycles since 1921 will show that the concessions the democracies make each time to buy new "psychological effects" are more and more vital. In 1921 the democracies insisted on trade only with private firms in Soviet Russia and could have won the point, given a minimum of stamina and solidarity, because the majority of the Politburo, including Stalin, was all for this concession. In 1974 such a condition would sound monstrously aggressive, an attempt to "change the Soviet regime." Now the point at issue is whether the Western democracies may explain democracy (say, by radio) to the populace of closed societies, for, though this practice is in keeping with all kinds of international agreements, nothing more greatly displeases the rulers of such societies.

The "new" superautocracies are as closed as their ancient predecessors. Radio, however, is a magical means of breaking through all their defenses and contraptions—the borders, the elaborate internal passport system, the ubiquitous secret-police control—right into the brains of the populace. Yet democratic electorates and their statesmen do not even want to see inside the totalitarian countries. They want to be good neighbors. They want 19th-century diplomacy because they want to believe that they still live in the safe and sensible world of the 19th century. Thus, more and more Western radio stations are broadcasting into Soviet Russia material that conforms more and more fully with Soviet propaganda—to the pleasure of everyone concerned except the mute Soviet populace.

On our arrival, an American friend took us for a tour of New York. He and his wife exemplified for us an amazing facet of the United States, and I recalled that even the vitriolic Dickens admired it more than a hundred years ago. We had met this American just by chance when he was a tourist in Moscow. Since then he and his wife had helped us as they might their next of kin, though we were perfect strangers, and they had several children of their own. They took us first to see the apartment they had rented for us and stocked with everything that might conceivably contribute to our comfort and pleasure (including *three* kinds of mustard in the refrigerator). Then they took us to see New York. Including the skyscrapers, of course. To me in Moscow the skyscrapers symbolized the strength of democracy—its sweep of free creativity which compensated, in my passionate dream for its survival, for its intrinsic human weakness.

We got out of the car. Here they were. The new ones were very good architecture. And they were high. But not as high as it had seemed from Moscow; here they seemed like Handel's music—majestic, but touched with a familiar, chamber-like quality. Their human features were enhanced by a skating-rink we saw, straight out of a Hans Christian Andersen tale. A girl of six or seven, holding a kitten, came up to us with a gesture women make when they mean, "Oh, I'm simply desperate." She extended the kitten, evidently a stray, to me: "Can you take this kitten?" I said: "My dear: can your kitten take *us*?" Everyone laughed, but the little girl said: "You shouldn't make fun of such things."

No, I shouldn't. But I am from the underworld of history, where a kitten's life is not so valuable. I looked up again: so those skyscrapers were also human, what with the skating-rink and the kitten. How vulnerably human and like chamber music it seemed, but what was going to happen to that kitten and everything? Perhaps I was arriving in the U.S. as one might have arrived in France in the 1930's. The "average civic index" that I had foreseen in my studies was purely theoretical: life, perhaps, would not confirm it. If so, unlike the case of France, this would mean the end of democracy. But at least I could publish my books (a contract rustled soothingly in my pocket), and hope that the words I wrote would be read some day as I now read the words written once in Athens.

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Stefa and Pomeranz

A Story

Amos Oz

Poland. Early winter, 1939.

A Jewish schoolmaster by the name of Pomeranz had fled from the Germans and gone into hiding in the forest. He was a short man with tiny eyes and thick, vicious jaws. He looked like a spy in an American comedy.

He was a teacher of mathematics and physics in the Mickiewicz National Gymnasium in the town of M——. His spare hours were given over to some kind of theoretical research; the secrets of Nature aroused a powerful passion in him. Rumor had it that he was on the verge of producing a discovery in the field of electricity or magnetism. And above his upper lip he lovingly cultivated a thin, nervous mustache.

At first Pomeranz hid in the depths of the forest in a deserted hut which had belonged to a woodcutter named Dziobak Przywolski. This Przywolski had been killed the previous spring by the peasants. They had chopped him to death with an ax because he always walked about the forest wearing an orange pointed hat and red boots, casually performed small wonders in front of the villagers, and claimed to have been born of a virgin. Among other things he had the power of healing an aching tooth by means of spells, of seducing a young peasant girl with the help of liturgical chants, of rousing the shepherd dogs to mad barking and then calming them down with a wave of the hand, and of levitating slightly at night, if only the wind was right. He was also in the habit of belching, and of stealing chickens left and right.

One Good Friday the woodcutter boasted to the peasants that if they hit him with all their might with his ax, the ax would break. So they hit him, and the ax did not break.

Pomeranz sat alone in the abandoned hut, contemplating the gradual disintegration of the roof beams, listening with strained ears to the restlessness of the forest at night, to the savage wind lashing the cowering treetops, to the whispering sadness of leaves.

He was left to himself day and night. He thought about many different things.

Far off down the forest slopes, where the undergrowth lapped at the river, German engineers dynamited all the railway bridges. Because of the murky distance and the thick moist air there was a delay, a hesitation almost, between the flash of each explosion and the low rumble of thunder. This delay, momentary though it was, gave an almost comical appearance to the whole spectacle, so that Pomeranz in his hideout was assailed by doubts. And, indeed, a few days later, on receipt of fresh orders, the same engineers reappeared, in the grip of a feverish enthusiasm, and began measuring the river and furiously rebuilding everything as it had been before; they stretched steel cables, planted concrete piles, erected a pair of twin prefabricated bridges, and restored everything to its former state.

But once again the distance and the autumn light bestowed an unreal, almost absurd, character on the frantic activity at the foot of the slope: tiny human figures, voices losing themselves among the hills, and the patient gray skyline. Time and again, at evening, melancholy forces landed and overran the forests and hills with dull, murky darkness.

Bread and water were provided him by an old sorceress from the village.

Terrified peasants would approach on tiptoe, occasionally depositing a roast goose at a safe distance from the hut, and vanishing instantly into the bosom of the forest. Dziobak Przywolski, the belching son of a virgin, had warned them in advance that he would soon return in another guise.

Or perhaps there were no peasants and no sorceress, and no roast geese, but Pomeranz lived there in a state of pure spirit, lacking all physical needs.

2

Stefa Pomeranz did not go into hiding in the forest with her husband, but stayed behind in her home in the town of M——. She taught German Thought in the same

Amos Oz, who is among the most prominent of the new Israeli writers, is the author, in English translation, of two novels, *My Michael* and *Elsewhere, Perhaps,* as well as a novella, "Crusade," which appeared in our issue of August 1971. "Stefa and Pomeranz" is a section from his forthcoming novel, *Touch the Water, Touch the Wind,* which will be published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (a Helen and Kurt Wolff Book) in November. The work was translated from the Hebrew by Nicholas de Lange in collaboration with the author.

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Mickiewicz Gymnasium, and even maintained a postal and telepathic correspondence with Martin Heidegger, the famous philosopher.

She was not in the least apprehensive of the Germans. In the first place, she abhorred wars, et cetera, and had no faith in them. Secondly, from the racial point of view she was only Jewish up to a point, and in outlook she was a devoted European. Moreover, she was a fully paid-up member of the Goethe Society.

Stefa stayed alone all day long in her artistically furnished little apartment, where she spent a few hours each day preparing the latest studies of Professor Zaicek for publication. Outside, disturbing things happened: Pomeranz ran away, Poland collapsed, German planes bombed the factories to the south, the railway repair sheds, and the army barracks, armored cars streamed down Jaroslaw Avenue all night, at dawn flags were changed, and Stefa closed every single shutter in the house in disgust, and the windows too.

Long and lean on the sideboard in her study stood an African warrior carved in wood and covered in war paint. The warrior seemed poised to spring at a dainty pink nude girl in a Matisse painting on the wall opposite, threatening her night and day with his huge fierce manhood.

Two ancient Siamese cats, Chopin and Schopenhauer, kept Stefa company. They slept curled up together on the rug in front of the open fire, filling the apartment with calm and tenderness. Sometimes Stefa thought she heard Pomeranz's slippered footsteps in the hall and his low cough, and once in the early hours of the morning her name was distinctly whispered. Here were his shaving things, here was his dressing gown, a smell of tobacco, a reminder of his silence. Everywhere there reigned an aggressive, uncompromising cleanness—shining kitchen and gleaming bathroom, tidy shelves and sparkling chandeliers. Stefa stayed alone all these days, behind her closed shutters. Gradually the apartment filled with a faint smell of perfume. From the picture rail, high above the piano and the many vases of flowers, a menacing bear's head stared down glassy-eyed at the sleeping Siamese cats.

The bear's expression was one of patient irony, verging on ultimate tranquillity.

STEFA was a beautiful, proud woman. From her youth on, all the local intelligentsia had wooed her with ideas and literature. Such an intelligent, artistic young lady, they had said, and now in a fit of caprice she suddenly gives herself to the dreamy son of a simple watchmaker. Such whims, they said, always die away as quickly as they are born. And the very name Pomeranz is absurdly incongruous for Stefa.

And indeed, when the Germans began to surround the town of M——, the dreamy son of a watchmaker fled alone to the forest, abandoning Stefa to her admirers, the local intelligentsia.

She hoped that he would succeed in surviving the present events and that she would see him again someday. She did not want to call her feelings by one name or another, but she sighed for him and had great faith in his powers.

Night after night the German guards made shooting sounds in the distance. The electricity was subject to frequent interruptions. The tradesmen became noticeably slacker. The dustman and postman neglected their duties. The drunken gardener, who was nicknamed by everybody "Run-Jesus," suddenly, without asking permission, took to living in the woodshed at the bottom of the garden, insolence and a secret menace flashing in his eyes. He grinned, flattered, spoke a lot, came and went as he pleased. And the maid, Martha Pinch-me-not, as suddenly abandoned poor Professor Zaicek, in whose house she had worked for the past seven years. She was criticized by everyone, and there were those who saw in her move a bad omen. Professor Zaicek, the pride of the city, was an elderly widowed scholar, whose name was well known all over Europe. He possessed a Karl Marx face, deeply scored by suffering and wisdom.

The military governor of the town, a certain Baron Joachim von Topf, issued an edict: the army was compelled to requisition the Gymnasium buildings. For the time being all classes were canceled. The Baron saw fit to append to the edict a word of apology to the citizens: the hardships of wartime would soon be over, and before long a new order would be established.

But the difficulties increased. The streetcars stopped running, prices soared, and the ancient belfry of St. Stephen's church—an architectural gem in the Florentine style—was damaged by a stray bomb. Nightly the sound of bricks was heard clattering in the ruined church. Sometimes the falling bricks struck the bell at night, giving rise to numerous superstitious rumors. Even in the circles of the Catholic intelligentsia, the view was expressed that everything was possible.

Various people, including some eminent citizens, abandoned the city. In the middle of Jaroslaw Avenue stood a burned-out streetcar, and a chestnut tree lay uprooted for several weeks. Professor Zaicek several times complained to intimate friends of an acute inflammation of the bladder. Grim and even wild rumors spread: women in the marketplace said that poor Jews, or priests, or perhaps only consumptives, were being transferred elsewhere by the authorities. The rumors were virtually impossible to trace, verify, or substantiate. In back alleys petty speculators proliferated nauseatingly. Even the library was temporarily closed.

Stefa was smitten by a secret disappointment. The war, for all its horrors and its vulgarity, had offered a certain possibility of rejuvenating Europe, of refreshing worn-out ideas, and of making her a participating observer of a mighty historical

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event, but in fact on all sides there was nothing but drabness and pettiness. One night some drunken soldiers smashed the historic stained-glass windows of the concert hall. The statue of Adam Mickiewicz was defaced with a thin mustache which bore a remarkable resemblance to that of the vanished teacher of physics and mathematics; unruly soldiers, or schoolboys who had run riot in the night. On the corner of Magdalen Lane a Swabian corporal addressed Stefa in such illiterate German that she was appalled. Suddenly it dawned: time was running out. Stefa had never been very strong; she suffered from migraines in the morning.

Worst of all, postal communications with the outside world were rapidly deteriorating. The old stamps were withdrawn from circulation. Pianos were requisitioned from several houses. The new order tarried in coming. Over all, with sly tranquillity, the bear's glass eyes looked down. And from the grocers' shops Portuguese sardines vanished as if they had never existed.

3

EARLY in 1940, with the first breaths of a bizarrely out-of-place spring, Pomeranz sallied forth from the hut in which he had hidden all through the winter and began to move from place to place. He assumed by turns the various garbs of herdsman and railwayman, peasant and priest. Gently, pensively, he glided south, southwest, and south again, a slow, almost bashful caressing movement across the dense forests. When the hunt was near he hid all day in barns on the outskirts of Godforsaken villages. At the onset of dusk he would leave his hiding-place and stand lean and erect in the darkness until he was cloaked in night, and then he would play softly on a mouth organ. The Polish air was instantly saturated with music. Pomeranz pawed the muddy ground, gathered an inner momentum, belched, sweated, leaned his elbows on the music he had discharged 'round about him, flailed with his arms, struggled and pulled, got the wind behind him, and finally uttered a soft grunt and wrenched himself free from the grip of gravity.

He rose and floated on the dark air, his body slack after the effort, borne high and silent over woods and meadows, over churches, huts, and fields.

So he overcame all the obstacles in his way.

He had once learned, perhaps from his wife, that time is subjective, an affection of the mind. And so he had a low opinion of it.

Even material objects, if you plumb their depths, are no more than vague images. In brief: ideas cannot be perceived, and perceptible objects can never be grasped by thought.

Ergo, nothing exists.

Germans, forests, huts, ghosts, wolves, dawn-stench of villages, haystacks, vampires, muddy streams, snowy expanses all seemed to him a clumsy, ephemeral convergence of abstract energies. Even his own body appeared to him to be a wilful tide of transient energy.

As he passed his frostbitten fingers across his brow he suddenly seemed to touch a star. Or as he clasped his frozen legs together in the snow in the forest at night he seemed to be struggling to reconcile two opposing ideas. He learned to devour whole marrows and pumpkins and follow them with raw mushrooms.

Yet he spared the music, and for the time being refrained from reducing it to its mathematical structure. He was saving this possibility for a moment of despair, a last resort, an ultimate weapon. In the same way he dispelled the memory of his wife and his home: longing was a poisoned snare, a lethal dart. Throughout his journey he kept in his pocket a little mouth organ. He could rise in the air, soar high into the night, even discard his body, by means of a change of tune. And into his worn red boots he stuffed sackcloth against the biting cold.

Solitude and wandering trained this educated Jew to eat raw potatoes, to quench his thirst with handfuls of snow, to mislead the noses of old wolves, to plant his footprints backward in the snow to baffle all pursuit. He had the power of feeling his way, using his thoughts like radar beams, through the tangled network of forest paths. So he eluded the German guards and bands of partisans, avoided minefields and trip wires, made his circuitous way along the valleys among hostile villages, untouched by foxes, vampires, or villagers with axes. And in his tattered sleeve he carried a grubby certificate of baptism in the name of Dziobak Przywolski, son of Mary.

If suffering got the better of him, he would forget his pride and emerge at dusk from the forest darkness, aided by the long shadows and deceptive twilight, scare a solitary peasant woman and plunder a goose or some eggs or a woolen kerchief. These forest regions, cursed by damp and darkness, were unloving and unloved. Closing in on all sides, offering no escape. So he passed on from darkness to darkness as if he too were cloaked in darkness.

4

DAYS and nights passed, and his foot became painfully inflamed. Melancholy overcame him, or perhaps for a moment he was carried away by longing. In one of the caves he lost his seven-league boots, or his hood of invisibility fell apart. In short, the music died away and the dreamy son of a watchmaker grew weaker and weaker until he was captured by a German patrol.

A lame, rotund major with rimless spectacles took the certificate of baptism from the prisoner and studied it so thoroughly that the writing

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grew faint. Then he raised a single, narrow eyebrow and ordered the short son of Mary to be taken to the cells: the brow, the vicious eyes, the heavy jaws, his smell, and that insolent mustache, the expression of a spy in a comic film, and on top of it all the torn robe of an itinerant priest, everything about him was obviously suspicious. Furthermore, the boredom and the fleas were playing havoc with the major and his men.

The cell was nothing more than the filthy cellar of an abandoned monastery or seminary: crosses and obscene drawings covered the walls. And the cold was piercing and tormenting.

Pomeranz suddenly recalled a conversation which had taken place years before. Stefa had taken him to the Philosophical Soirée of the Goethe Society. The intelligentsia of the town of M—— were involved in a discussion of political vis-à-vis metaphysical wrong. Bright, bespectacled young men, all of them thin, gazed covertly at Stefa's legs, then at her plain, silent husband, and back again at her long-lashed eyes. Dream-stricken Stefa. When the first exchange of witticisms had died down, Professor Zaicek spoke about conflicting ideas and their universal tendency to circularity. His Karl Marx face silently radiated, as always, an agonized wisdom, and his voice when he spoke was tender and tired. Eventually they drank tea and nibbled cakes, and in the small hours of the morning they beguiled Stefa into playing some sad études, while they all gazed at her waist with moist eyes.

In the afternoon Pomeranz was brought up out of the cellar and interrogated tediously and off-handedly: where, when, why, what he had seen; he was asked about the potato crop in the Poznan region and the fish in the Vistula. In the middle of the interrogation they lost interest in him; three corporals came into the room and some others arrived and they started to play cards and left Dziobak Przywolski alone till the telephone was mended, or the major came and decided, or something.

But he did not leave his captors alone.

Those Germans turned out to be coarse men.

In vain did he try to discern in them even a spark of dark, demonic fire: hour after hour they played cards, swore, shot with their submachine guns at a bottle on the gutter of the roof, fried pork in pork fat all night long.

This prisoner, for his part, never stopped talking to all of them. He tried to entertain them and to win their sympathy; he tried to make them laugh, to play his mouth organ for them, even to start an argument. By means of conflicting ideas tending to circularity he attempted to establish some kind of fundamental agreement with his jailors. After all, both he and they were part of the same perpetual structure, and without either side the structure could never materialize.

They were delighted. The spate of high-flown, unintelligible words revived in some of them childhood memories which were vague but strangely sweet. First they gave him beer mixed with salt to drink. This amused them and gave rise to fresh witticisms. They had the idea of dusting him with sneezing powder to make him sneeze more and more until he could not stop. Then, slobbering and slurping as they gorged themselves on pork fried in pork fat, they threw crusts of bread at him and feigned innocence. There was great merriment.

There was a babyface among them, pure, pink, and pathetic, who coaxed and implored the guest to turn water into wine, wine into fire, fire into water. And another, a gloomy corporal, a diligent, dedicated schoolboy in a uniform too big for him, looking like Young Werther, stretched out on the filthy floor and pleaded with the sneezing stranger to stop leading them into temptation, for it was too great for them, they were but weak, base matter. There were also numerous drooling drunkards, running with brotherly tears, who tended Dziobak Przywolski continuously, giving him drink, picking out his lice, and rolling him onto his back and over onto his stomach again. The air was thick with coarse tobacco, frying fat, and stale wine. Till early morning, peals of laughter re-echoed, and tears too flowed freely.

The prisoner, however, did not relax his grip on ideas all night long. He addressed them all with devotion and didactic enthusiasm, in excellent, elevated German, speaking at length with both wit and warmth, sneezing frantically, making abundant use of paradox, introducing astounding hypothetical possibilities, arresting syntheses, mathematical speculations, dialectics, and more savage sneezes, he conclusively proved that he was of a virgin truly born; they might test him with ax or gun, he was dead and risen again, and sent to bring salvation; vomit and beer were baptism and prayer, ahchoo amen, and he wiped their spittle from his face as he groped with words for a synthesis and in desperation even performed a few small miracles, but all in vain.

In short, he with his Germanic thought, with signs and wonders, and they for their part with pork fat.

And yet beneath their uniforms these Germans were nothing but brutish peasants, lumps of clay from Silesia or Lower Saxony, endlessly guzzling beer and staring vacantly into space: cloudy glassy bear's eyes.

Even the lame major, a stuffed Viking with fake gold hair, was an elderly man convulsed with hiccups, who was carried away all that night with high-pitched weeping.

And the guard post itself, formerly a convent or a village seminary, was filthy enough to arouse disgust in a soul which appreciated Culture.

So it happened that Pomeranz suddenly grew tired of his captors.

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With an inner shrug he completely abandoned the intellectual confrontation, the synthesis, and in his heart he took his final leave of the nauseating Germans.

Toward morning he began to belch and paw the ground. *Far away in the Promised Land, All our hopes will be fulfilled.* The mouth organ discharged a few sad notes and the man, dreamy and forlorn, rose into the air. Up through the chimney he floated and away into the forest: metaphysical wrong cannot be perceived, while perceptible wrong emits a powerful stench of pork fat.

5

STEFA took Professor Zaicek into her home.

Flaxen-haired Martha, his servant, had abandoned the scholar's house when the Germans had entered the town. And the Professor, who was adept at discovering hidden links between St. Augustine and Friedrich Nietzsche, had never managed to learn to tie his own tie.

He was a lonely, helpless old man. When he bent over the grate to light the fire he covered himself with coal dust, and when he put more coal on he singed the ends of his beard. The smoke blinded him and filled his eyes with tears which buried themselves in his bushy white beard. Despite everything his close friends told him, the Professor continued to maintain the belief that Martha had left him and his house for a man, and that she would be sure to return when her love cooled down. Was that not just what had happened with Martha's cat—she too had disappeared and come back when her time was past. Even his postal links with scattered friends all over Europe progressively deteriorated. Worst of all, the Goethe Society had ceased to function, and the Goetheans themselves seemed to have vanished into thin air.

Perhaps they had all fled to the cellars, to the forests, and only he was forgotten?

There, in their dark hideout, by candlelight, all the Goetheans would be meeting every night and holding whispered conferences. They would draw up a sensational document which would instantly bring the world back to its senses. Germany herself would open her eyes and be smitten with shame. And meanwhile Stefa came; the drunken gardener, Run-Jesus, piled several suitcases, bags, files of documents, photographs, and woolen underwear on a small handcart, and that night the Professor was taken into Stefa's house. Times were not easy.

And so toward sunset, as evening came down, while Martha Pinch-me-not abandoned herself to the arms of clerks or mustached policemen, while the Goetheans in their candlelit cellar fitted word to word with supreme care, the Professor would stand alone at the window for half an hour or more, and contemplate the fading of day. He could see the damp gray wind howling across the town of M——, bursting out over wide wintry expanses, stirring the fir forests, screeching at cottage windows. Far away in the distance he could see huts and towers, and beyond them the lights of Warsaw gradually dying away, the swell of the turbid Baltic, night stooping over Berlin, steep ravines darkening in alpine valleys, he could sense the mighty rivers flowing through the dark —Volga, Rhine—darkness on the peaks of the Pyrenees and Apennines, darkness on the northern steppes and the mountains of the Balkans, and over all, bitter and piercing, the howling of steppe wolves at solitary towers. Then Stefa would gently touch his shoulder. Professor Zaicek would start, bow deeply to his watch, peering to make it out, and announce:

"It is dark outside."

Stefa would draw the heavy curtains, put on the lights, lead the scholar to an armchair, and offer them both a drink. The Karl Marx features, touched by wisdom and agony, would brighten slowly, painfully, as though by a powerful effort of the will, until they finally suggested the hint of a shy smile. Stefa would say:

"A pleasant evening."

And the Professor, dreamily, gently, somewhat distantly, would hasten to respond:

"A pleasant evening, Stefa, yes indeed."

How Stefa loved the flavor of those first mornings. She would bring him a hot cup of coffee in bed, and Professor Zaicek, however early she came, would always be waiting for her, his blue eyes wide open, and would remark in carefully chosen words on the beauty of the morning and the purity and purifying power of the birdsong coming from the garden. She would help him out of bed, brush and comb his thick beard, tie his tie, straighten his cuffs, and pat a little eau de Cologne into his prophetic mane. Then she would take his arm and lead to the breakfast table a magnificent, well-groomed old man, thoroughly prepared to face a new day.

At bedtime she would sit by his bedside, a cool intellectual beauty, and softly sing him, in a peasant-girl accent, some of the folk songs which flaxen-haired Martha used to sing him: only these songs could lull him into the arms of innocent slumber. Barefoot and erect in her nightgown, she would slip into his bedroom around midnight to see that his night light had not gone out. His regular childlike breathing instilled a sense of peace in Stefa.

DAYS and weeks passed, and from time to time at unforeseen moments there may suddenly have been a slight touch: her hand may have brushed against his, a melody touching a ruin.

All day long the old man sat silently in front of the fire, lost in thought. At his feet the two cats, Chopin and Schopenhauer, lay curled up together sleeping. Martha would soon come back.

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The winter would pass. In Jaroslaw Avenue the chestnut trees would blossom, log-laden rafts would drift once again down the river, and anglers would sit motionless on the bank. Meanwhile the wind howled outside, because it was winter and this was a wintry place.

Stefa would say:

"It is as if time were standing still, the days go by so slowly."

Professor Zaicek:

"And even though the room is so warm, my feet are frozen."

Stefa:

"How about some brandy. Or some tea."

Zaicek:

"Yes indeed, Stefa, that ink you bought yesterday was watered. And in the middle of the night there was a tinkling sound. Who is mending glass in the street at night?"

SOMETIMES toward evening the Professor would summon up hidden reserves of strength; he would rise from his chair and pace to and fro with porcelain footsteps on the rug, a little woolen skullcap secured to his mane with a hairpin, dictating a thought or two to Stefa. Afterward Stefa was requested to play the piano, and he, huddled and racked with agony, looking like a wizened embryo curled up in a jar, would suddenly challenge Nietzsche's view of the birth of tragedy from the spirit of music. His words were joined together with a hushed pathos, and when he stopped talking and turned his back on the room to stare out of the darkening window, Stefa felt that the air was charged. All that winter he was carving out in his mind the materials for a future work on the painful relationships between people. All the various relationships: Man and woman. Father and son. Brothers. Casual tennis partners. Master and slave. Teacher and pupil. Persecutor and victim. Lover and beloved. Pair of strangers.

As Professor Zaicek spoke, Stefa was sometimes certain that a special smell emanated together with his words and filled the room, a rough brown smell, like the smell of dying chestnut leaves in autumn.

Darkness came, feeling its way with long fingers of twilight, spreading like black death over all Europe, over streams and birch trees, over shuttered cities and desolate tundras, over Poland and its forests, and into the room, creeping under the armchairs, 'round the cats, the shelves, the ornaments, the pink Matisse girl, the African warrior threatening her, the gleam in the eye of the stuffed bear, darkness in Professor Zaicek's low sad voice, affirming in unambiguous syntax the circularity of all laws, unraveling the tangled ties between death and madness, love and mercy. Mystical reasoning. Take this very evening, he would say, both here and everywhere.

And night like a heavy cloak settled on the town of M——, enfolding the wounded belfry of St. Stephen's church, subduing the dockyards and charging them with restless massivity, pressing heavily on the shattered fountain in Magdalen Lane, clasping into its desperate embrace Jaroslaw Avenue, the concert hall, the wooden shacks in the outskirts, the guards in their menacing greatcoats, the river; blackening the snow-covered fields, waving a forest spell over the town, and turning the town to forest.

6

FURTHERMORE.

Stefa was so surprised she could scarcely believe her eyes: an antique Gothic clock without hands adorned the corner of the drawing room, and now suddenly Professor Zaicek with his own brittle fingers had succeeded in making it utter a few dim chimes from its depths.

Just like Pomeranz, then, who had fled to the forests, Professor Zaicek, too, was the son of a watchmaker. Who of them isn't, Stefa asked herself. There was once a little song current in some of the villages, which bore popular testimony to the connection between Jews and watches:

Good morning, fine morning, my dear Mr. Jew,
Let me propose a small deal to you:
You have a watch, I have a hatchet—
Throw me your watch and see if I catch it.

The Professor suddenly recalled the song, but he supposed that Stefa neither knew it nor wanted to; so he restrained himself and merely hummed the tune into his beard, and in his usual fashion, as if it involved an extraordinary physical effort, he summoned up the ghost of a smile. While outside in the dark in the snow a heavily wrapped German patrol went by.

Conditions deteriorated week by week and almost day by day. Occasionally Stefa fought back a sob. A loaf of rye bread cost four zlotys. The drunken gardener, Run-Jesus, chopped down the apple trees in the garden to keep the fire burning for a few days longer. And he exacted the price of his silence with ever more menacing cheerfulness. At dawn the sky glowed red from distant fires around the town. An elderly humanist complained that a German soldier had called him a name in one of the main streets of the town in broad daylight. A hundred and six shaven-headed orphans were taken from the orphanage and transported in a cattle truck to a holiday camp by the Black Sea, some said to Madagascar. The town was alive with wild speculations, rumors, black-marketeering, and primitive superstitions.

The military governor of the town, General Baron von Topf, instructed his staff to examine the town register carefully and draw up a complete and detailed list of individuals actively involved in music. On the basis of this list the General Baron formed a private orchestra of

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burghers, in addition to the circle of historians which was summoned to meet for brief discussions in the governor's office at extraordinarily early hours of the morning.

So it was that every Sunday an eager band performed in the square in front of St. Stephen's church, and a German loudspeaker cheerfully invited the audience to take the floor. He also ordered the Mother Superior Felicitas to be stigmatized—in the old meaning of the word—at the ruins of the belfry. He wished to conduct an experiment: it had occurred to him to settle once and for all a thousand-year-old controversy, whether or not there was any truth in the common belief that the Virgin had bestowed a particular grace on the Polish cross. And if she had, whether the state of grace still obtained. And because a method cannot be based on a single case, von Topf continued to experiment in various different ways. He was passionately devoted to the twilight zone between theology and metaphysics. According to a rumor, he was learning, or trying to learn, Hebrew at night. Moreover, he had been attracted by nuns since his early youth.

Professor Zaicek said to Stefa:

"It is my duty to speak to him. The situation must be clarified. You must invite him here one day, Stefa my dear, for a talk, for tea, so that we can demand an explanation."

Stefa said:

"That would be a terrible risk. Even your papers are not your own."

The old man reflected, and admitted the fact. For a while he absently stroked one of the Siamese cats, then he leaned back and continued gently stroking the arm of his chair. How he wanted not to sound melodramatic, yet to use words that Stefa would never be able to forget, even in her dreams. Finally he spoke:

"But Stefa. Surely. We didn't run away to the forest, did we? And why did we both refuse to run away? Surely, dearest Stefa, it was because the word danger has no external validity. We have taught time and again, and recently we have even committed it to print, that the real danger is always from within. And have we the right, my wonderful Stefa, to turn our backs on our own teaching? Surely there are moments in the life of an individual or of a people when silence is an abhorrent misuse of speech. No, Stefa, no, my dear, no, here we are and here we stand and we cannot be otherwise. In the face of evil, we must stand up and say: evil! Now it's time for tea."

Primly but eagerly, almost gaily, Stefa clapped her hands, only the corners of her mouth betraying a new determination.

"Yes, teatime, my dear Professor; I am sure you have been waiting for your tea. Won't you take your place at the head of the table; here comes your napkin, and your teaspoon, and here's the samovar."

She tied the napkin 'round his neck to protect his brown jacket, put his teaspoon in his hand, deftly removed a silver hair from his shoulder, poured two cups of tea, and nodded to Professor Zaicek to give the sign.

The sage asked in vain for butter; times were not easy. So he gave the sign for them to start, took a hesitant sip, and said:

"Kindly put on the light. And in the study too. After tea I want to dictate a letter to Martin Heidegger. His position is a great mystery to me. I deliberately refrain from saying a disappointment. A Socratic letter. That is to say, I shall put a few questions to him. Questions and nothing more. Yes, Stefa, of course I shall lower my voice as you request, but I shall not stop talking. As for compromises, my dear, you and I could both get up tomorrow morning and leave for America or Palestine as if to say that evil disgusts us but is none of our business. But that is not what we have taught, that is not what we have written, that is not what we have determined. It is madness to think of evil as the private affair of the evil man, just as hunger is not the private affair of the starving man or disease that of the invalid, nor is death the problem of the dead, but of the living, and that means us, my one and only Stefa. The thermometer fell again today, and apparently therefore it is getting colder. You ought to devote a moment's thought to Martin Luther. Luther was vulgar and ignorant, and yet he offers us a surprisingly clever way out of the moral dilemma. But should we, my Stefa, casually take this cheap way out? No, Stefa, no, my dear, we shall hold fast to our course even in the midst of this great darkness. There's that glass tinkling again in the street—in the garden—as if all of a sudden there are pieces of glass hanging from the branches of the trees and the wind makes them tinkle. What is it, Stefa, what does the tinkling signify, if indeed it signifies anything at all?"

Stefa said:

"I can't hear any tinkling. The windows are closed and shuttered. There's nothing there."

The Karl Marx face, furrowed by wisdom and agony, seemed to brighten and darken and brighten again in the flickering light, and the warm voice spread through the room as if seeking the darkness beyond the shuttered windows. How can he, thought Stefa, how can he ask me to put on all the lights? Now. These are almost the last days. There is no more time.

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Lawyers at the Bar

Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.

IN RECENT months the legal profession has been under the most severe attack in years—from the press, from the politicians, and even from itself. Anthony Lewis of the New York *Times* declares that "The record of the lawyers around Richard Nixon is one of the most appalling aspects of his Presidency. There has been nothing like it in the history of our government or our bar." Mr. Lewis is more easily appalled than most, and seems to have forgotten a good deal of history, but there are plenty of other Jeremiahs. Senator John Tunney, speaking as chairman of a Senate subcommittee investigating the bar, demands to know whether the American Bar Association "is more interested in protecting the pocketbooks of its members than in delivering services to those who need them most." Former Chief Justice Warren fears that the involvement of lawyers in Watergate has weakened such confidence as there was in the profession. And the present Chief Justice condemns "the low state of American trial advocacy" and speaks of a "sick profession."

Of course lawyers as a class have rarely received a kind word from anyone. Plato said the lawyer's "soul is small and unrighteous," and added that he practices "deception and retaliation, and has become stunted and warped." Jesus said to the lawyers, "Ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burden with one of your fingers." The general dislike of lawyers was put into the sharpest focus by artists, writers, and poets. Daumier's drawings of advocates (though lawyers love to hang them on their office walls) are the cruelest he ever did. Virtually all of Dickens's lawyers are bloodsuckers and sharks—Vholes, Sampson Brass and his sister Sally, Dodson and Fogg. Mr. Dooley thought "they'd be no gr-reat har-rm done if they was all hanged." Not even the greatest lawyers bear fair characters in history and literature. Macaulay (whose own legal gifts rivaled his genius as historian and critic) called Coke a "pedant, bigot, and brute" and said of Francis Bacon that he "was a servile advocate, that he might be a corrupt judge."

By such standards the current denunciations of the legal profession are mild and temperate. But there are manifestations of public displeasure more serious than verbal excoriation. The most conspicuous, of course, are the difficulties of ex-Vice President Agnew, ex-Attorneys General Mitchell and Kleindienst, and the various Watergate defendants (to say nothing of assorted state judges and at least one federal judge) with the criminal law. Much less familiar to the public is the suit filed by the Securities and Exchange Commission in the National Student Marketing Company case, to establish that the huge New York firm of White & Case, and the equally huge Chicago firm of Lord, Bissell & Brook, themselves violated the federal securities laws when they failed to restrain their clients from violating those laws by publishing misleading financial statements and failed to report the violation to the SEC. That suit raises a horrifying (to lawyers) prospect of enormous civil liability. For if the court agrees with the SEC, every partner in the two firms (more than a hundred very solvent lawyers) may be personally liable to every public investor who lost money—a lot of public investors, and a lot of money.

Wall Street law firms (and their equivalents in other cities), like the lawyers who represent the plaintiffs in suits for securities fraud, are watching the National Student Marketing case with much closer attention than they watch Watergate. The problem in securities-fraud cases has always been to find a defendant with a deep pocket, since the Birrells, Vescos, and Cornfelds are likely, by the time the balloon bursts, to be judgment-proof or uncatchable. The law firms of Wall Street and LaSalle Street (like the big accounting firms and brokerage houses) have pockets of remarkable depth. Once it is fully appreciated that lawyers can not only sue but be sued, the practice is sure to spread. (And indeed, another great Wall Street firm, Willkie, Farr & Gallagher, has already been made a defendant in the litigation arising out of the collapse of Bernard Cornfeld's Fund of Funds and the rest of his mushroom empire.)

The lower levels of the profession have eco-

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nomic troubles too. For one thing, the Department of Justice is now asking the courts to enjoin, as a violation of the antitrust laws, the practice (very common among state and county bar associations) of setting minimum fee schedules. Then there is no-fault legislation, which the army of lawyers whose bread and butter is the personal-injury claim (mostly, of course, arising out of automobile accidents) view as the Devil is said to view holy water. The reason is simply that compensating accident victims without a determination of which driver was at fault—and with severe restrictions on the collection of damages for "pain and suffering" (often a term of art meaning counsel fees)—might very well drive most Claimants' Compensation Attorneys (as they like to call themselves, in the manner of Morticians and Realtors) out of business altogether or into less familiar and maybe less profitable hunting grounds, such as environmental law, product liability, and consumer protection.

BUT all this is only one aspect of what is perhaps the most serious problem of the legal profession today—namely, that the bar has failed to get its services to ordinary people who need them, at a price those people can afford to pay. The development and growth of a society seem invariably to be accompanied by an increase in the complexity of its laws and the number of its lawyers. Forty centuries ago Babylonian law, civil and criminal, had proliferated to such an extent that Hammurabi's lawyers and stonecutters used up all four sides of a diorite stele eight feet high merely to set down its fundamentals, that all men might know, for example, that the death of his son was the appropriate penalty for a real-estate developer whose jerry-built house collapsed and killed the son of the buyer. (I strongly suspect that in practice such cases usually resulted in cash compositions.) The Romans, an abnormally litigious people, progressed, as the Republic grew in size and wealth, from the Laws of the Twelve Tables to more than 3,000 acts of the Senate, some of them running to a hundred chapters or so, engraved on brass plates.

As might be expected, the United States has the most law of any nation ever heard of. Yale's law library, which is large but by no means the largest, contains more than half a million volumes, most of them highly indigestible. An annual avalanche of new state and federal statutes, regulations, court decisions, administrative rulings, etc., etc., threatens to bury every law librarian in the country. Accordingly, the need for legal advice and representation has become as great as the need for medical services. Even so, one would think that our 375,000 lawyers could adequately supply the demands for law and justice of a population even larger than ours. But in fact many Americans have trouble getting either.

One difficulty is that some of the 375,000 are of stupefying incompetence. True, almost all are graduates of a law school. But even the most prestigious and selective law schools still graduate some blockheads, though far fewer of them than in former years, and schools at the other end of the scale may hand diplomas to almost anyone who has paid his tuition and attended classes with reasonable regularity.* It is also true that a large majority have passed a bar examination—but in most or all the states the candidate can take the bar exam several times, or indefinitely, until he finally encounters one he can pass, or the bar examiners grow weary of flunking him.

The cost of legal care has risen almost as fast as the cost of medical care—and there are as yet no adequate public or private schemes for insuring the middle and lower-middle classes against legal catastrophe. The rich, as usual, are well served. Their business and financial problems are handled by the mandarins of the bar, the great Wall Street firms and their peers in other cities. Such moguls may charge several hundred dollars an hour, or more. Their customers can afford it, and they usually get what they pay for. Their legal affairs are in better shape than those of poor people for the same reason that their teeth are—i.e., preventive measures. The main job of a Wall Street lawyer is not to get his clients out of trouble, but to keep them from getting into it in the first place. When he drafts a contract, a will, or a trust, his object is to make it so incontestable

* It may be worth noting in this connection that the lawyers who were closest to the President and who were principally involved in the Watergate scandal were not drawn from the upper ranks of the profession. Only Ehrlichman, who has a J.D. from Stanford, is a product of a prestigious law school. Only Mitchell, who was a partner in Nixon, Mudge, Rose, Guthrie, Alexander & Mitchell, has been associated with a prestigious law firm, and that association was of a somewhat peculiar sort. He had been a member of a small and obscure New York firm, Caldwell, Trimble & Mitchell, from 1942 to 1966, when it merged with Nixon, Mudge. Mitchell's firm had only two partners and seven associates, none of whom held a degree from a law school of the first rank. The firm concerned itself almost exclusively with the issuance of "state, county, and municipal securities"—a type of practice that may be highly lucrative but in which legal learning is much less important than a wide acquaintance among local politicians. Indeed, Mr. Nixon himself probably had more impressive legal credentials than any of his close legal advisers. He was a graduate of Duke Law School, had been an editor of its law review, and, while still a student, had published an article ("Changing Rules of Liability in Automobile Accident Litigation") which is something of a minor classic in its field. But his early practice, before he took to politics, seems to have been of no very high order. In one case a dissatisfied client of a firm which occasionally employed him charged (although it should be emphasized that the court made no finding on the charge) that "a young attorney, Richard M. Nixon," acting as "outside man" for the firm, had bid in the property of her judgment debtor (and thereby satisfied her judgment for an amount she thought too little) in her name but without her knowledge or consent. (See *Schee* v. *Holt*, 132 Pacific Reporter, 2d Series 544, California Court of Appeal, 1942.)

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that no one will ever be fool enough to challenge it in court. Usually he succeeds.

The poor do less well, of course, but better than they used to. The Supreme Court has made it clear that a man faced with jail must be given a lawyer, without cost if he cannot afford to pay one. Public defenders, other public and quasi-public agencies, and court-appointed counsel (usually paid by the state or federal governments) generally do an adequate job of representing poor men accused of crime. Poor people faced with civil problems—divorce, landlord and tenant, welfare rights, consumer fraud, and many others—still have trouble getting legal help, but there is at least an increasing recognition of the problem and an increasing effort to do something about it, mostly through programs funded by the federal government, foundations, and the bar itself.

IT IS the people in the middle who are most likely to get less legal counsel than they need. They have enough money to encounter substantial problems with taxation, purchase and sale of houses, probate, and divorce. But their ideas of what a lawyer might charge are vague and alarming (often with reason), and they tend not to consult one until their troubles have become really painful, by which time it may be too late. The American Bar Association is engaged in an extensive and expensive study of the extent to which high fees deny legal services to the public, but both the study's conclusions and its impact are as yet unclear. What is clear is that about two-thirds of the population do not get the benefit of preventive law, as they often do not get the benefit of preventive medicine and dentistry.

Probably the long-range solution is some sort of group insurance or legal Blue Cross (sometimes cutely labeled "Judicare"), partly subsidized by government. Some labor unions have already established group plans for their members. There are also ways of making legal services cheaper.

Much of the work that lawyers do can be done at least as efficiently and more cheaply by other people. Bar associations ought, for example, to stop their efforts (which in late years have not been particularly successful) to enjoin real-estate brokers, savings banks, and title-insurance companies from handling the formalities of conveying real estate, searching title, and recording mortgages. They are as good at it as most lawyers. The same observation applies to the preparation of tax returns by accountants and the activities of banks in the routine probating of wills and the administration of trusts and estates. Lawyers themselves, like doctors and dentists, should delegate more run-of-the-mill tasks, such as drafting commonplace wills and leases, to paraprofessionals, and charge correspondingly lower fees for them.

THE other main reason for the bad press the legal profession has been getting is, of course, the predominance of lawyers among the Watergate principals. Mitchell, Kleindienst, Ehrlichman, Colson, Dean, Krogh, Kalmbach, Liddy, Hunt, and indeed the President himself, are all lawyers. Yet it did not need Watergate to show that some lawyers are not as honest as they ought to be. (They never have been. In 1403 Parliament found it necessary to prescribe, with what effect I cannot say, that lawyers be "good and virtuous and of good fame.") Disciplinary procedures, moreover, which are usually initiated by bar associations, have tended to be infrequent, lax, and lenient. Highly visible offenders, like Messrs. Agnew and Dean, are likely to be disbarred (although they may be quietly readmitted after a few years), but in too many jurisdictions most delinquents are punished lightly (as by censure or brief suspension from practice) or not at all. In 1966 Jerome Carlin, in a study of the New York City bar, estimated that "only about 2 per cent of the lawyers who violate generally accepted ethical norms are processed, and fewer than 0.2 per cent are officially sanctioned." Last year exactly twelve lawyers, including G. Gordon Liddy, were disbarred in Manhattan and the Bronx, and 102 in the entire country. Four years ago the ABA's Special Committee on Evaluation of Disciplinary Enforcement, under the chairmanship of Tom C. Clark, a retired Justice of the Supreme Court, grimly concluded that:

> After three years of studying lawyer discipline throughout the country, this Committee must report the existence of a scandalous situation that requires the immediate attention of the profession. With few exceptions the prevailing attitude of lawyers toward disciplinary enforcement ranges from apathy to outright hostility. Disciplinary action is practically nonexistent in many jurisdictions; practices and procedures are antiquated; many disciplinary agencies have little power to take effective steps against malefactors.

The committee made many detailed recommendations for swifter and more effective action, and some states are experimenting with some of them, although the results cannot yet be described as dramatic. The Judicial Conference of the United States, composed of senior federal judges and headed by Chief Justice Burger, wants Congress to pass a law empowering federal judges to order FBI investigations of lawyers accused of "unethical conduct" or "conduct unbecoming a member of the bar." Both the ABA and the Association of American Law Schools think law schools ought to do more to inculcate sound ethical standards in their students, although they are not clear *how* the professors ought to go about it.

The trouble is that only the cruder sorts of dishonesty are generally recognized as unethical. Obviously a lawyer should not embezzle a client's

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money, or suborn perjury, or offer in evidence a document he knows to be forged. But there are a great many other difficult questions to which the answers are not so obvious. Should a lawyer defending a criminal case permit his client to go on the stand and lie under oath in his own defense? Should he cross-examine and try to discredit a prosecution witness whom he knows to be telling the truth? If he believes that a client plans to violate the law, should he, if neither efforts at dissuasion nor threats to withdraw from representing the client avail, make report to the police, the Internal Revenue Service, or the Securities and Exchange Commission? Should he refuse to defend an accused who will not behave himself in court? In short, how far is it proper to go in a client's behalf? It may be proper for a tax or antitrust lawyer to advise a corporate client to sail as close to the wind as can be done without capsizing, but should a lawyer give similar advice to the President of the United States? To such questions as these the Canons of Ethics (recently revised and rechristened by the ABA as the "Code of Professional Responsibility," but nearly as vague and platitudinous as they were before) offer no clear answer.*

A PROFESSION held in such low esteem, now so threatened with indigence, and beset with so many moral and intellectual problems, would, one might suppose, be shunned by the righteous and respectable and left, like the cleaning of outhouses, to untouchables. Yet the very reverse is true. The latest Statistical Abstract of the United States shows that there were 355,000 lawyers in 1970, or one for every 626 people, and current estimates go as high as 375,000. It is true that no real explosion of the lawyer population has yet occurred. In 1900 one man in 665 was a lawyer, and even in 1850 there were 24,000, or about one in a thousand. But there are signs that a startling increase is on the way. Last year 138,000 hopeful young men and women took the Law School Admission Test—up 21,000 from the year before. Not all of the 138,000 will attend law school; not all of those who do will graduate; not all who graduate will practice law. But if even half of them survive, it is obvious that the number of lawyers will multiply at a rate calculated to cause panic among legal Malthusians. Law as a career, Watergate or no Watergate, is in higher favor than ever before in our history.

One reason for this sudden popularity is the realization that a lawyer has more options, more possible careers, than a member of any other trade or profession. In addition to practicing law, lawyers often occupy the highest jobs in the biggest corporations (about 12 per cent of corporation presidents are lawyers), and they are of course even more numerous in government and politics. Domination of the political process by lawyers, in fact, has been a feature of democracy at least since the days of the Roman republic. Cicero made his reputation by prosecuting malefactors of great wealth or subversive tendencies and owed as much to Catiline as Nixon owes to Alger Hiss. Caesar's talents as an advocate contributed almost as much as his military genius to his political success. And as for the United States, Tocqueville said that in America "lawyers . . . form the highest political class."

Tocqueville, as usual, was right. Twenty-three of our first thirty-six Presidents (including Lincoln, Wilson, and Franklin Roosevelt) were lawyers, although Mr. Nixon is the only one among the last five. The predominance of lawyers is no less marked in the legislative branch. It is probable that they have constituted a sizable majority of the members of the House and Senate since 1789, and of the 535 members of the present Congress, 292 are lawyers. At lower levels of government they are hardly less numerous: one out of every 49 men, women, and children in the District of Columbia is a lawyer. It is no wonder that the profession was so predominant in the Watergate cast of characters; its absence would have been far more astonishing. Whatever is done in government in America, for good or ill, is likely to be done by lawyers.

I find no clear and categorical answer to the question *why* law and politics are so closely linked, why a class which is less than 1 per cent of the nation furnishes more than 50 per cent of its rulers—not counting its rulers in the judicial branch. But some explanations naturally suggest themselves. The first and most obvious is that law *is* politics. In Germany *Recht und Staatswissenschaft*, law and political science, are usually treated as a single academic discipline, as they might well be in this country. Politicians make laws, and lawyers are naturally inclined to make politicians. By the same token, the abilities and skills of lawyers much resemble those of politicians. The stock-in-trade of both consists of words, and occasionally of ideas. Good lawyers can organize and present (or sometimes distort) facts (or some-

* Anyone looking for guidance on at least one of these issues might well turn with profit to what Dr. Johnson said to Boswell in 1768: "I asked him whether, as a moralist, he did not think that the practice of the law, in some degree, hurt the nice feeling of honesty. JOHNSON: 'Why no, Sir, if you act properly. You are not to deceive your clients with false representations of your opinion: you are not to tell lies to a judge.' BOSWELL. 'But what do you think of supporting a cause which you know to be bad?' JOHNSON: 'Sir, you do not know it to be good or bad till the judge determines it. I have said that you are to state facts fairly; so that your thinking, or what you call knowing, a cause to be bad, must be from reasoning, must be from your supposing your arguments to be weak and inconclusive. But, Sir, that is not enough. An argument which does not convince yourself, may convince the judge to whom you urge it; and if it does convince him, why, then, Sir, you are wrong, and he is right. It is his business to judge; and you are not to be confident in your own opinion that a cause is bad, but to say all you can for your client, and then hear the judge's opinion.'"

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times nonfacts) in a lucid, comprehensible, and persuasive way, which is the very stuff of politics. They have a strong sense of what is practicable, and they are used to negotiation and compromise, which is also the very stuff of politics. They generally have a working knowledge of the present state of the law, as it affects ordinary voters, and thus are likely to have some ideas about useful changes and the way in which new laws will actually work.

Lawyer-politicians of this sort rarely have the messianic temperament. They may, like Lincoln, have strong convictions about what is right and what is wrong, but they try to turn those convictions into law by persuading the people, for they know that if the people are unpersuaded they will not win elections. Lincoln did not issue the Emancipation Proclamation until he judged that Northern voters were ready for it, and he preferred to end slavery forever by the democratic process of amending the Constitution.

There is, however, a large and growing class of lawyers who are not skilled in politics, and some of whom hold the ordinary democratic process in something close to contempt. The average voter, they believe and sometimes say, is ignorant, a bigot and/or a fool; it is wrong to let him stand in the way of changes which they sincerely (and perhaps rightly) believe to be noble and necessary. If the Babbitts and Archie Bunkers will not do these noble and necessary things, other ways must be found. As Professor Anthony Amsterdam of the Stanford Law School, the dean, so to speak, of this school of legal thought, puts it: "Major change is necessary in our society. . . . If it is not possible within the legal system, the legal system is going to have to be changed by any means necessary to change it." A few years ago, those who felt this way—particularly if they were young—were inclined to favor revolution as the "means necessary" for effecting "major change." But revolution is no longer considered feasible or inevitable; instead there is a growing tendency to work for major changes within the legal system itself. This is certainly better than bloody revolution, but it may not always be the same thing as accepting the democratic process. For what some of the new legal activists are trying to do is to use the legal system to circumvent the political system and to settle in the courts and the bureaucracies issues which under our form of democracy are supposed to be decided by the people and their elected representatives.

Thus we have witnessed a prolonged campaign to persuade the Supreme Court that capital punishment is always and in all circumstances cruel and unusual and therefore in violation of the Eighth Amendment—this despite the fact that it is certain that the framers of that amendment never intended to abolish the death penalty and despite (or because of) the fact that a majority of the voters stubbornly continue to think death the best way to dispose of certain murderers. (At least one member of the Supreme Court, Justice Marshall, frankly says that the voters are too ignorant to be allowed to decide this question.)

We have also witnessed a persistent, determined, and frequently successful effort by zealous lawyers to persuade other lawyers working as bureaucrats—particularly in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare—that the Civil Rights Act of 1964, whose plain purpose was to *prevent* discrimination, requires the *creation* of racial and sex quotas intended to benefit some favored groups, inevitably at the expense of other groups.

This idea is gaining popularity in all sorts of bureaucracies. When the law school of the University of Washington (which, of course, is run by lawyers) created racial quotas for admission, setting aside a number of places for members of particular racial minorities, it necessarily meant that a number of more highly qualified whites, who would otherwise have been accepted, were turned down because of their race. (The Washington law school was unusual only in the openness of its policy; many universities and colleges have more or less covert programs of the same type, applying not only to the admission of students, but to the hiring and promotion of faculty.) When one of the excluded white applicants, Marco DeFunis, challenged the constitutionality of his exclusion and reached the Supreme Court, a great many eminent lawyers, including Archibald Cox, not only failed to see anything in the law school's policy which was inconsistent with the purpose of the Civil Rights Act, but argued with great eloquence that the university's action did not deny DeFunis the equal protection of the laws. A majority of the Court managed to avoid deciding the question by holding that the impending graduation of De Funis (who had been admitted to the law school while the case was in litigation) made the issue moot. But it is likely that the Court will have to face this issue sooner or later, and when it does there will be plenty of legal activists ready to argue (as some of them *did* argue in the DeFunis case) that the Constitution not only permits but commands discrimination on the basis of race, so long as the discrimination favors members of the right races.

So with busing. A great majority of parents (including many non-whites) fear and dislike the idea of shipping their children over long distances into unfamiliar and maybe unfriendly environments. It is correspondingly unpopular with legislatures. Far from securing the passage of statutes requiring busing to achieve racial balance in the schools, its proponents have had their hands full trying to water down bills forbidding it. But activist lawyers have so far had a large measure of

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success in persuading activist judges that the right and simple holding of *Brown* v. *Board of Education*—that lawmakers cannot constitutionally require the segregation of schoolchildren by race—means also that the Constitution demands whatever measures are remotely conceivable to realize their vision of schools in which every race, or at least every race that can be found within a radius of ten or twenty (or sometimes more) miles of the school, is represented in proportion to its numbers, regardless of hardship to children and parents, and regardless also of the paucity of evidence that such measures do anything to improve the quality of education.

The most spectacular triumph of the legal activists, however, is the decision of a majority of the Supreme Court, in 1973, that the Constitution confers upon every woman an absolute right to procure an abortion during the first three months of pregnancy and a qualified right to do so in the next three or four months. The Constitution, of course, is completely silent on the subject; it is extremely unlikely that the question ever occurred to any of those who framed and adopted that instrument. The lawyers and Justices had to search long and hard for arguments; they had to rely on such unlikely guides to the meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment as the writings of ancient Greek philosophers and physicians, some of them fairly obscure even in their own time. But it worked. The citizenry suddenly found that the great debate on abortion had been definitively settled, without the annoying and time-consuming process of holding any kind of public referendum.

I AM NOT debating the wisdom or morality of racial quotas, or capital punishment, or busing schoolchildren, or encouraging abortion. Many citizens think they are good ideas; many others do not. But all these questions are surely suitable for resolution by the ordinary political methods of a democracy. If lawyers who are elected to office make new laws that the people really dislike, there is something the people can do. But what can the people do when they are told by courts and bureaucracies, in the name of the Constitution or of a statute which on its face contains no such mandate, that they must do or not do things that neither they nor their elected representatives ever meant to require or prohibit?

The motives of the 138,000 young people who tried to enter law school last year are as various as their abilities. But if the hundreds of applications I have read in the last two or three years are a fair sample, a great majority see the Juris Doctor as a key to social reform, protection of the oppressed and the environment, and general moral and social uplift. And many of them are more dazzled by the prospect of saving the world without useless delay, by filing brilliant briefs and drafting comprehensive regulations, than by the tedious, sordid, and often fruitless method of trying to convince the voters. Their attitude toward the democratic process, in fact, bears an odd resemblance to that of the Nixon lawyers who installed bugs, tapped wires, burglarized the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, and attempted to audit the tax returns of their enemies—just as their wish to use the legal system for political ends recalls the example of the big-business lawyers who fifty or sixty years ago persuaded the courts to enjoin the unionization of labor and to hold unconstitutional statutes intended to improve working conditions. ("I care not who makes th' laws iv a nation," said Mr. Dooley, "if I can get out an injunction.")

I CAN imagine solutions to the problem of getting legal services to the people who need them, and even to the problem of making the profession reasonably honest and ethical. These deficiencies are at least recognized, inside as well as outside the profession, and they are not incurable. I have more trouble with the new (or newly revived) concept of the lawyer's role in politics. I may well be too gloomy. The courts can always call a halt to the process of government by judicial injunction and administrative regulation. Possibly they will do so (and possibly they will not: one of Mr. Nixon's appointees wrote the abortion decisions, and two others concurred). But if they do not, we are bound to travel further and further down the road of law without democracy.

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Culture and the Abyss

Samuel Hux

No matter what the range and virtues of English literature, it is not a literature notable for tragedy. Shakespeare and a few others aside, even when we come to the "darker" literature in English—not tragedy precisely, but various misanthropic views, records of personal suffering, testaments of pessimism, or of frenetic ecstasy—more often than not the writer turns out to be not so much "English" as Gaelic. The virtues of English civilization are manifold, but there seems in it some essential failure to appreciate that side or depth of life Nietzsche meant by "Dionysian"—beneath the social, beneath human individuation, the threatened or promised collapse of man-made civilization and the absorption of man into a kind of ego-less insignificance both terrifying and ecstatic: "the tremendous *terror* which seizes man when he is suddenly dumbfounded by the cognitive form of phenomena because the principle of sufficient reason, in some one of its manifestations, seems to suffer an exception," and the "blissful ecstasy that wells from the innermost depths of man, indeed of nature, at this collapse of the *principium individuationis*."

"Failure to appreciate" is perhaps the wrong phrase. Nietzsche often writes as a kind of votary of the Dionysian, and I suggest to no one that he share the enthusiasm. Failure sufficiently to recognize is closer to what I mean—a clear and steady imagining of a realm of existence prior to and beneath human culture and still a potentiality because we have been individuated from nature only recently as historical time goes. Call it, as many have, the "abyss": the moral chaos before the conclusion of Aeschylus's *Oresteia*; the irrational fate that Oedipus cannot escape; the witches' brew of *Macbeth*; the cold grayness of the world of *Hamlet*, ready at any time to blossom hotly into a chancre. Human success, happiness, ease, association, are fragile because human-made; the abyss is wider and deeper and bides its time.

But if that ego-less space motivates the tragic form to such an extent that there is no "tragic" without the recognition of it, tragedy in turn is really a celebration of human culture, as if to say: "Human artifice may be fragile, at worst a stop-gap, but it is what we have to differentiate us from all that out there." "Reason not the need," says Lear to Goneril and Regan, who question his requiring the superfluous accoutrements of state.

> Our basest beggars
> Are in the poorest thing superfluous.
> Allow not nature more than nature needs,
> Man's life is cheap as beast's.

After Shakespeare, Thomas Hobbes comes close to imagining the abyss, with his famous characterization in *Leviathan* of life in a state of nature: "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." The state of nature we are led to observe by John Locke, on the other hand, is not fundamentally different from a state of law, and in this Locke seems to me a more typically English thinker; while it is true for him that in a state of nature men's "lives, liberties, and estates, which I call by the general name 'property,'" are in jeopardy, a man still has a right to his property through the law of nature. Consequently, the social contract simply insures what nature has given him. In Hobbes, however, the pre-political state of nature is a much more terrifying affair, fundamentally different from the state of law:

> The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law; where no law, no injustice. Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues. Justice and injustice are none of the faculties neither of the body nor mind. . . . They are qualities that relate to men in society, not in solitude. It is consequent also to the same condition that there be no property, no dominion, no *mine* and *thine* distinct; but only that to be every man's that he can get, and for so long as he can keep it. And thus much for the ill condition which man by mere nature is actually placed in. . . .

I am not equating Hobbes's nasty brutishness with Nietzsche's Dionysian, but simply suggesting them both as images of the abyss below culture and civilization—the kind of image that is rare in English letters. Aside from occasional Gothic novels suiting a fashion, wonderful fantasies passed off as opium dreams, prophetic books of genius, depictions of psychological abortion amid general

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good health—none claiming a tragic vision—the darkness that one is usually invited to view by English literature is that of the malfunctioning of a given social order. Plenty of critics have observed that English literature is primarily a middle-class literature, especially since the 19th century—that is, a literature directed at an upwardly-mobile class of readers, a literature of manners, serving alternately as a kind of collective courtesy book and as a critique of the existing social ways. This leaves room for a very narrow view of tragedy as social or political failure. It is not Sophoclean; not Shakespearean.

Are we in contact here with some national characteristic? English philosophy tends to fluctuate between empiricism and idealism. In both, man's relation to the world, nature, the out-there, is fixed and assured, inspiring confidence; in both a profound pragmatism reigns. For the empiricist, nature serves man by its solidity; for the idealist, nature "might as well" be there, for our actions inevitably assume it. English culture is never in danger of being *overwhelmed*. Programs fail, empires disappear, the common experience of the race is undergone, but English culture always appears the equal of nature. For it, the abyss is at best a neurotic fantasy—the obsession of weird Germans seeking Teutonic mysteries in some dark forest, the stock imagery of French poets hyped-up on drugs and *symboliste* language, the frenetic attempt of American novelists to find a usable past in a dead puritanism in order to *have* a past, the self-indulgence of Russian misanthropes, wallowing in unreason and imagining a tortured incestuous embrace with Mother Russia under a bloody icon.

English commonsense has provided the Englishman with more physical, emotional, and social comfort than any other European, and has provided him and hundreds of expatriate continentals with an extraordinary degree of liberty. In the 19th century Walter Bagehot found the French, unlike his English, "not dull enough to be free." "Why are we free and they slaves? We praetors and they barbers? Why do stupid people always win?" Bagehot's answer: "What we opprobriously call stupidity, though not an enlivening quality in common society, is Nature's favorite resource for preserving steadiness of conduct and consistency of opinion"—which is both an intelligent celebration of dullness and its rewards and, typically, an offhand assumption that culture is the mirror of nature rather than something which keeps us from falling into it. There is something admirable about this commonsensicalness, what Orwell called the "humbug and decency [and] subtle net of compromises." But I suggest again, realizing the relative smallness of my concern, that such a milieu does not nourish great tragic literature—a point of interest to a literary critic; and I wonder, with little hope of a clear answer, if it doesn't effect some essential human cost.

SURELY one of the most tragic books of this century is Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*. First, it is a heroic book—dogged ("But if we want to know . . . we must clearly attack another problem") and argumentative in spite of being tentative and nervous. More important, it evinces a clear and steady imagining of the abyss and a willingness to observe both nature and civilization without sentimentality.

> The existence of this inclination to aggression which we can detect in ourselves and justly assume to be present in others, is the factor which disturbs our relations with our neighbor and which forces civilization into such a high expenditure. In consequence of this primary mutual hostility of human beings, civilized society is perpetually threatened with disintegration. The interest of work in common will not hold it together; instinctual passions are stronger than reasonable interests. Civilization has to use its utmost efforts in order to set limits to man's aggressive instincts and to hold the manifestation of them in check by psychical reaction-formations. Hence, therefore, the use of methods intended to incite people into identifications and aim-inhibited relationships of love, hence the restriction upon sexual life, and hence too the ideal's commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself—a commandment which is really justified by the fact that nothing else runs so strongly counter to the original nature of man.

The last clause especially contains an irony like nothing I know in English letters.

But I assume the general outline of Freud's argument in this book is familiar. I would like to look for a moment at the first chapter, which was originally published separately. It is a curious essay. Freud describes his correspondence with a friend—later identified as Romain Rolland—in which the friend reported having experienced a kind of "oceanic feeling," "a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded," which he suggested as the source of religious sentiment. Freud doubts this, in detailed fashion; and as for the "oceanic feeling," he writes that he cannot discover it in himself. Something related, perhaps. For while ordinarily "there is nothing of which we are more certain than the feeling of our self, of our own ego," there *are* states in which the external boundaries of the ego seem to disappear and we are somehow a part of something larger. The possible experience of being in love, for instance, when "the boundary between the ego and the object threatens to melt away"; or the sure experience of the infant, who does not "distinguish his ego from the external world as the source of the sensation flowing in upon him." Later in life the individual marks out the space of his ego (in ways familiar to Freud's readers) but even then there remains something of the earlier state.

> Our present ego-feeling is . . . only a shrunken residue of a much more inclusive—indeed, an

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> all-embracing—feeling which corresponded to a more intimate bond between the ego and the world about it. If we may assume that there are many people in whose mental life this primary ego-feeling has persisted to a greater or lesser degree, it would exist in them side by side with the narrower and more sharply demarcated ego-feeling of maturity, like a kind of counterpart to it.

A kind of oceanic feeling.

Now, this essay in *Civilization and Its Discontents* does not exhibit the profound (and, paradoxically, inspiring) pessimism of the rest of the book. But it uses the same method (for want of a better word). As if to say: I do not find precisely what I am looking for; I find something very much like it; I do not like what I find; here it is. What Freud finds, the "here it is," is that civilization is as fragile as it is necessary, it is threatened by the very same moral chaos and undifferentiated rapacity out of which it arose; and that the individual ego is equally fragile, its boundaries never really certain, counterpart even yet with a more primal feeling. More important—in some way both civilization and ego are denials, are denatured nature. Civilization is the repression of instinct, a trade of happiness for longevity. Ego is a "shrunken residue" of a more inclusive feeling. Neither man nor his culture is "natural."

Freud's book is so rich and complex that it is easy to mistake. Some "followers" have said, "Consequently, let us tighten the restrictions on man"; others, "Consequently, to hell with civilization." Both miss the point. The suggestion that ego and civilization are denatured nature, so to speak, that they are against the original nature of man, does not mean that they are artificial in any effete sense. The very fact that they are sustained in a tension against nature means that they are profoundly related to it in a kind of longing and hostile embrace. This is no deracinated, epicene view of man and culture; civilization is *not* what we mean in the bad sense of the word "cultivation," has nothing to do with teacups, delightful conversational trivia, pale bookishness. Freud's view of civilization is a thoroughly tragic one; it grows out of a clear and steady imagining. Another way to put it is that for him civilization is always in danger of being overwhelmed.

Again, it is precisely this view that I do not find in English culture as a rule. Overwhelmed? No; civilization is the equal of nature, as it is its assumed reflection. If, as Kenneth Burke has remarked, "men build their cultures by huddling together, nervously loquacious, at the edge of an abyss," then it seems to me that the structure of English culture was completed long ago and most energy since has gone into elaborating on it, with only a very occasional glance beneath. It is there now, as something like an institution, animated not by any particular felt necessity. Consequently, while English commonsensicalness is nothing if not admirable, there is something worn and yet adolescent about English civilization.

II

BEFORE I ever went to England I had been told I would find the landscape a singular sight. It does not loom over one as in the United States; it is human-sized, as if created intentionally for man to feel at home; the rivers are quintessentially "bridgeable," the mountains within reasoned scope; the fields do not reach into the distance but rather are interrupted and contained within one's vision by something of moderate height, a hill, a hedge. Nature on a human scale, in other words.

But my impressions were more extreme than that—English nature seemed to me not so much on a human scale as somehow smaller than human. The landscape was not merely contained within reasonable limits, but altogether lacked the power to overwhelm; one was on a level footing with it. There is a story by Tolkien, called "Leaf by Niggle," about a landscape painter who has a journey to take, a kind of fantastic death, and who discovers that the journey is into a landscape he has already painted and indeed, in the logic of this fantasy, *is* the painting itself—"a mountain-peak and a spray of leaves." An accidental metaphor but to the purpose—a very small landscape indeed.

These impressions returned to me in Spain three Augusts ago, partially out of sheer contrast with the Spanish landscape (always startling and seldom less than just short of oppressive). But they returned in a way and for a reason which intensified them and created an illusion, at least, of cultural significance—a chain of associations and observations. There seemed something consistent between the English landscape and the relative absence of a vision of the abyss in English letters, as if English literary culture were an internalization of place—and, given the modes and gestures of English people abroad, as if the internalization of the culture itself ill-suited one to appreciate, or even to notice, beyond the flicker of an eye, the surroundings abroad.

Accident had it that I was fairly well surrounded by English people in Spain; which was at first a comfort before it became an unexpected amusement which yielded finally to a kind of unnerving impatience. I have made my living as a kind of professional Anglophile, professing things English in university English departments, and to a degree internalizing that culture as a standard of sanity and perceptiveness. So I was not prepared for my mild disappointment with the legitimate inheritors of English culture, not prepared for my ironic feelings about that cliché so long accepted as admirable: the whiskey neat in Malaya, the high tea in Africa. But there was something about the Englishmen I met that suggested a lack of ad-

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venture, as if they were simply making their vacation an extension of the familiar, carrying the familiar with them in their baggage. Not a defensive or assertive behavior—a screwing-oneself-up—but one which suggested that nothing was in question for them: neither their identity, their place in the world, nor the meaning of the place they happened to be at the moment. I may be exaggerating, but the English capacity to be unmarked by surroundings, as if all surroundings were somehow smaller than the occupant, depressed me when it didn't amuse me. To put it at its least worthy and most self-indulgent, I confess to annoyance that the English were not overwhelmed by a place that moved *me* so deeply. And if I was not prepared for these thoughts about the English, neither was I for my response to the place.

I wish to be clear that what moved me about Spain was not the popular image, *La Leyenda Negra*: the land of blood-soaked earth, Inquisition, oppressive priestly black, repressed desire and suppressed ambition, cold arrogance and hot anger, the Escorial, the Alcázar, interminable fratricide, death and Christ the King in an embrace of mutual endorsement. (Bernanos reports the satisfaction of a Nationalist bishop with the opportunities for confession afforded to Loyalist prisoners: "Only 10 per cent of these dear children refused the last sacraments before being dispatched by our good officers." A Basque priest recalls the execution of a Loyalist by Carlists: arms extended as if in crucifixion, he was commanded to cry, *"Viva Cristo el Rey!"* as his limbs were amputated.) It was not that rampant and murderous sentimentality that moved me; I am a Southerner and I've heard enough paeans to the dark and bloody ground and had enough literary necrophilia to last a lifetime.

Rather, there was a kind of formality and elegance of speech and movement—absolutely classless—which impressed me much more deeply than English *formalism*; a range of alternating rhythms and gestures, swift and then slow-moving, brooding, subtle, and graceful, a gesture of the soul rather than mere external manners—as if there were something *necessary* about it. And the prevalent formality of the Spaniards—altered in degrees by personal style, to be sure, receding into the background of gesture now but reappearing with the force of a ritual at unexpected moments—in its turn seemed somehow consistent with the size and overwhelmingness of the Spanish surroundings.

I take it that the culture of a nation reveals itself in the commonality of ready assumptions, tones, physical and mental inflections, that it is nothing but bibliophilic oddity if it reflects only the heated thoughts of poets or ambitious philosophical systems. Culture—or its formalized distillation into gesture, movement, and speech—is not exactly the mirror of nature, as Bagehot might have assumed it to be, but it can be something close to that: a kind of arrogant imitation of the landscape which is at the same time a form of homage to it. The Spaniards' dark formality and sullen grace suggested that they *knew something*. I can only guess, but I had the impression within a few days that what they knew was connected intimately with the physical environment of their country.

III

The particular province doesn't matter; it includes all of Spain: plains, tablelands, mountains, sea. One can easily enter the mountains from the village I lived in; they look down upon you and roll off into the distance. Or one can drive thirty miles or so into the flatlands and turn to look at the mountains in the distance on a level with one's eyes. As one drives back, approaching the mountains gradually, they are bluish gray in contrast to the prevailing light brown, burnt yellow, of the flatlands. That burnt color is as much a matter of heat and dryness of air as it is literal hue, but it tends to obliterate the considerable greenery—the almond trees, for instance—which fixes itself in your vision only when you focus on it consciously and exclusively.

I gradually left the flatlands behind and drove into the mountains, exiting finally from a serpentine road over the hump of the range onto the equally serpentine coastal range. As you travel this road, the range rises above you and the cliffs step down below you to the sea. Where a cliff does not plunge directly into the sea, it plunges to the shoulders of another, and that to another until the sea is reached. Only rarely are the peaks of the range not visible—a thousand feet, I suppose, above. A sheer face of rock, pock-marked, resting on a green bulge of mountain-side which farther down rests in turn on a series of rock-walled terraces, shaped there, I was told, by the Moors. There are long stretches of road with no terraces visible, and then they appear again, sometimes on either side or inside of an occasional village, sometimes in the middle of nowhere. Always on this road you are held, it seems, on doubtfully secure space: riding the hip of the range which is itself merely leaning inland from the sea.

My destination was a promontory to the north which I'd been told I should see. The approach to the peninsula is through a port which has become a vacation land—the result of sitting approximate to a natural beach five or six miles long. Mid-afternoon, I was tired from the drive, didn't want to cope with accommodations late at night; so I selected the hotel nearest my parking-space, registered, and deposited my traveling possessions in the room—a very few clothes, the Freud I was reading sporadically for no particular purpose, and a textbook on tragedy I was dutifully lugging about in intended preparation for a course I was

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to teach in the fall. Then I went out to the street to recuperate with coffee before driving out on the peninsula. I was startled by the waiter's greeting—in English. English had not been a useful language where I had been, but here it was; most of the tourists here were English.

The peninsula is about thirteen kilometers long and no more than three at its widest point, so that it's often the case that you're looking at the northern stretch of sea one moment, and after turning the next bend, looking at the southern stretch. But first one has to leave the *puerto* and drive toward what appears an impassable mountain which rises sheerly and without subtlety from a vast, flat field. Then, after zigzagging back and forth up the face of the mountain, one descends a gradually easing decline, increasingly wooded, into a valley some four or five kilometers long and so heavily wooded that there is no evidence at all to the eye of being among mountains. The road rolls through this valley, the forest aggressively green to either side.

After a while—it did not occur to me to time the journey—I was out of the forest. Around one curve, with the barest of road-shoulder protection—a few small boulders, a decaying fence—would appear the sea, seemingly directly some few hundred feet below; around another curve, a deep, blanched valley spotted with boulders and lined with useless stone walls and pinching inland behind me; around another, totally unprepared for, some two hundred feet below the level of the road with no visible traverse to it, an absolutely flat hilltop which reached out toward the sea, becoming at its farthest extremity a ledge of rock and plunging as a cliff to the water.

The very end of the peninsula is an enormous cylinder of rock rising some five or six hundred feet out of the sea, perhaps two hundred in diameter at the top, a lighthouse dead center; and claimed by half-a-dozen aging mountain sheep, obese, their wool browning, with bells about their necks.

I got out and walked about, thoughts aimless, half listening to the silence interrupted by bells until the bells faded; the sheep, follow-the-leader, walked slowly down beside the road to the foot of the mountain until they looked like brown shrubbery moving and resting. It was now getting toward twilight—the sun descended from view while I was there—but there was no suggestion of fading of light. The visible air was simply of a different quality about the area—less the luminous, burning haze—and allowed the scene a fantastically etched clarity: rocks and sturdy shrubs and the silence like an absence of movement.

This was the sort of place that could be described in travel brochures as "beautiful, wild nature in the raw"; I had unthinkingly assumed something like that. And it was raw and beautiful; but beautiful in a harsh and brutal way almost indistinguishable from ugly—all angularity and absence of soft line, emphatic, chiseled, stark. I found myself admiring the place for its aesthetic brutality as fixedly as one would admire uncompromised beauty, and recognizing a surprising quality in the surroundings which was far from wild, and seemed instead . . . *formal*: the brownness, the whiteness, the solidity, the clarity, the quiet; a whole concert of shape, color, and quality seeming to contain something.

I DO NOT remember when I first gazed with attention at the sea, which from a six-hundred-foot high water's edge looked more expansive than I had ever seen it. So I cannot tell if it was that belittling expanse or the locked-in rock immobility which first made me begin to feel so lonely. In any case, I did feel a loneliness that was profound, seemed to resonate, and was of a quality unrelated to mere isolation. On the seaward side of the rock was a low stone wall for the protection of visitors. I turned and walked to it, settled my palms upon its top, and looked to the sea for some time, trying to see where the knife-point white of waves became gentle undulations and finally glazed surface farther out. After a few minutes I became aware with a start that although I was looking straight ahead, the horizon was not where it was supposed to be—it came into view only when I raised my eyes. The horizon was above the level of where I stood, and straight ahead was the sea tilted up and away. I realized then of course that I was simply not standing straight, that I had been leaning outward without being aware. But I was chilled: the explanation seemed inadequate. I felt in some way I had been attracted or pressed outward.

I know perfectly well that it is possible to have an unrealized suicidal compulsion lacking specific motivation, an experience of frightened attraction to something expansive and inclusive and undifferentiated—an experience which is real and inevitable, given the right moment. It should not be confused with that conscious flirtation with death that some people convert into a badge of moral superiority and insight, claiming for themselves a greater profundity than those of us who merely wish to live. I am not at all certain that the experience I am describing is a good one to have.

Upright now, I looked in an angle over the edge of the rock, but the closest water I could see must have been a hundred yards from shore; the stone wall kept me from standing at the edge. I moved down several yards to where the wall was closer to the edge, but still I could not see the water line below. So I leaned over intentionally this time, then crawled over, and finally kneeled at the very edge of the rock and peered down to see the water. I had to look down and slightly back and under before I could see clearly where sea met rock: the rock itself was leaning appreciatively toward the sea. So I hadn't been standing

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straight up before, but on and somehow *with* the rock, my posture conforming to the shape of things.

I climbed back to the other side of the stone wall and stood looking inland, scanning the giant rock, and feeling a weighted pressure in the air about me. With no sun visible to seize my attention, all things seemed intent upon this rock leaning out toward the sea which was battering away just under it. The mountain faced this point; the range behind peered over the closest mountain toward this point; the cartographic lines of the peninsula, as I recalled my journey here, formed a slender, imperfect triangle converging on this place.

All things focused on this rock and the sea. The sea was silently lashing away at the rock as it had been doing forever. It was expansive, reaching as far as I could see and as wide; and the lines of vision, center, left, and right, seemed to correspond to some immense funnel ushering all that sea to this point. There was something quiet and intentional about it. Odds were in its favor: given the mute method and fierceness, it was sure to topple the rock someday. And no secret to the rock cylinder. But until then, it would stand its ground and absorb the violence—locked anyway in this elemental dance. And both in recognition of what must inevitably happen, and in defiance of it, the rock leaned out over and toward the sea: a strong, quiet, formal gesture.

I was seized with a feeling so heavy it was suffocating and seemed to reach down into my body —my muscles were aching, I realized; a feeling that I did not belong here and that warred with my desire to remain. I walked to my car, and drove away, knowing, when I was able to sort out wishes, that what I needed most at this moment was a chance to ease into the privacy of a comfortable chair in a public place and reflect, preferably surrounded by the half-heard conversation of confident English voices.

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On Leo Strauss

Milton Himmelfarb

Leo Strauss died in October 1973, at the age of seventy-four. His name is known chiefly to two groups of scholars whose interests do not normally converge, political scientists and specialists in medieval Jewish thought. For political scientists he was the man who challenged what "everyone" knew was the first requirement of science—that it should be, in Max Weber's language, *wertfrei*, value-free. A scientist —an astrophysicist, say—does not ask whether the things or processes or relationships he studies are good or bad, noble or base, desirable or undesirable. A social scientist is a scientist. He has a choice: on the one hand, objectivity, freedom from or neutrality about values, science; on the other, subjectivity, value preferences, not science. When, inevitably, the scientist thinks of good and bad, he thinks of them not as a scientist but as a human being, or citizen.

To the scientific study of politics Strauss opposed the philosophical study of politics. He had no objection to empirical political science—the study of voting preferences, for instance, and similar humble but useful inquiries. It was against social or political science understood as value-free that he waged battle. He held that what the social or political scientist studies is so entangled with good and bad, better and worse, that value-freeness is impossible. All social scientists deal with values, only some social scientists know they do and others do not know, or say they do not know. Since the ancients taught this, and since the moderns have obscured or denied it, the beginning of wisdom—not the end, the beginning—is to take the ancients seriously again, to entertain the possibility that they were not defeated once and for all in the 17th-century war of the moderns against the ancients. Strauss did not persuade anything like a majority of his profession, but his followers include a number of impressive people. For them, it was he who restored political philosophy from death to life. Beyond that, for them he was a great political philosopher in his own right. Among themselves his followers rank him if not quite so high as Plato and Aristotle, then at least as high as Locke or Burke.

Strauss was also a Jewish scholar. "Jewish scholar" is ambiguous. It can mean a Jew who is a scholar in non-Jewish things or a scholar in Jewish things. Strauss was both, to a unique degree. Only the most eminent Jewish scholars, in the second sense, are fellows of the American Academy for Jewish Research. He was a fellow, because of his work on Judah Halevi, Maimonides, and Spinoza. In the world of scholarship as a whole, he was better known for his work on Gentile thinkers, from Socrates to Weber.

The books he wrote as books are *Spinoza's Critique of Religion; The Political Philosophy of Hobbes; On Tyranny: An Interpretation of Xenophon's Hiero; Thoughts on Machiavelli;* and *Socrates and Aristophanes*. The books that consist of more or less separate studies are *Persecution and the Art of Writing; Natural Right and History; What Is Political Philosophy?; Liberalism Ancient and Modern;* and *The City and Man. Philosophie und Gesetz* ("Philosophy and Law") has not yet been translated.

With Aristotle, Strauss taught that to understand the political one must start neither from the depths nor from the heights but from the surface. Since he himself was a political philosopher, let us take his advice and start from his surface.

At the University of Chicago, where he taught political philosophy for many years, Strauss's title was Robert Maynard Hutchins Distinguished Professor. Yet his disciples called him Mr. Strauss. We may infer that in his citizen's capacity he thought himself and wished to be thought a gentleman rather than a specialist or member of a guild, and that in his thinker's capacity he thought himself and wished to be thought a *philo-sophos*—the form is his—a seeker after wisdom, rather than a professor of (political) philosophy. Of Hermann Cohen he wrote that Cohen was by force of spirit the most impressive professor of philosophy in Germany. That is respectful, and we know that in fact Strauss had enough respect for Cohen to do him the honor of taking serious issue with his thinking about Spinoza and to write the introduction to the translation of Cohen's book about Judaism and ethics. But he called Ernst Cassirer, no less, a philosophy professor rather than a philosopher, and he said that the relation between philosopher and professor of philosophy is like the relation between

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artist and member of an art department. A German Jew, he was lacking in the German and German Jewish appetite for the title of Herr Geheimrat or Herr Professor or Herr Doktor. What was good for Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle was good enough for him.

THE first thing anyone who has heard of Strauss is likely to think he knows about him is that Strauss believed that the authors he studied and wrote about—among them Plato and Lucretius and Judah Halevi and Maimonides and Marsilius of Padua and Spinoza and Locke—wrote esoterically, with secret meanings and intentions at odds with what they evidently said and what the authorities told us they said. There was a time when this idea was resisted and ridiculed, but today it is hardly disputed that on the main point Strauss was right, and that certain texts were written to be read, as it were, between the lines.

Strauss describes the process in *Persecution and the Art of Writing*:

> We can easily imagine that a historian living in a totalitarian country, a generally respected and unsuspected member of the only party in existence, might be led by his investigations to doubt the soundness of the government-sponsored interpretation of the history of religion. Nobody would prevent him from publishing a passionate attack on what he would call the liberal view. He would of course have to state the liberal view before attacking it; he would make that statement in the quiet, unspectacular, and somewhat boring manner which would seem to be but natural; he would use many technical terms, give many quotations, and attach undue importance to insignificant details; he would seem to forget the holy war of mankind in the petty squabbles of pedants. Only when he reached the core of the argument would he write three or four sentences in that terse and lively style which is apt to arrest the attention of young men who love to think. That central passage would state the case of the adversaries more clearly, compellingly, and mercilessly than it had ever been stated in the heyday of liberalism, for he would silently drop all the foolish excrescences of the liberal creed which were allowed to grow up during the time when liberalism had succeeded and therefore was approaching dormancy. His reasonable young reader would for the first time catch a glimpse of the forbidden fruit. The attack, the bulk of the work, would consist of virulent expansions of the most virulent utterances in the holy book or books of the ruling party. The intelligent young man, who being young, had until then been somehow attracted by those immoderate utterances, would now be merely disgusted and, after having tasted the forbidden fruit, even bored by them. Reading the book for the second and third time, he would detect in the very arrangement of the quotations from the authoritative books significant additions to those few terse statements which occur in the center of the rather short first part.

Strauss tells us to watch how an esoteric writer uses and arranges quotations. Though he may not exactly have been an esoteric writer himself, it pays to watch him. To his paper, "Maimonides's Statement on Political Science," in *What Is Political Philosophy?*, he prefixes a quotation from "Cicero *De divinatione* I":

> *Sed quid ego Graecorum? Nescio quo modo me magis nostra delectant.* [But why have I been so occupied with the things of the Greeks? Somehow our own things give me greater pleasure.]

This is missing from the study as it appeared first, in the *1953 Proceedings* of the American Academy for Jewish Research, which is strange. After "Maimonides" in the title, and in emphatic contrast to "the things of the Greeks," "our own things" must mean Jewish things. It is almost as if Strauss were saying that having dealt with Greek thought all his life he was belatedly turning his attention to Jewish thought. But he wrote about the Greeks last: first he wrote about medieval Jewish and Moslem thinkers, then about the early moderns, and last about the Greeks. What is more, in that study Strauss goes on to show that Maimonides's statement on political science is itself Greek. I decided to look into the quotation from Cicero.

Strauss had not made that easy: if the esoteric were easy it could hardly be esoteric. As it took me some time to discover, the quotation is from *De divinatione* I, xxvi, 55, where I further discovered that *ego*, "I," is not the author, Marcus Tullius Cicero, but his brother and foil Quintus. Against the philosophical Cicero, Quintus upholds dreams and portents. The "things of the Greeks" are incidents from Greek history that he uses as argument for divination, "our own things" incidents from Roman history that he would rather use.

Strauss may be hinting at something like this: Our own things, the Jewish things, give us pleasure because we are Jews, but they are not philosophical things. "Divination" is related to "divine." Jewish things, Jewish books, are concerned with the divine. The divine is not philosophical, philosophy knows nothing of the divine.

Like Maimonides, Strauss was a Jew and a philosopher. Like Maimonides, he held that "Jew" and "philosopher" exclude each other. A Jew must believe in revelation, a philosopher cannot. More than Strauss—and more nobly, Strauss would have been the first to say—Maimonides sacrificed the philosopher in himself to the Jew.

On the other hand, Strauss was as different as can be from the academic non-Jewish Jew, so common on both sides of the Atlantic. He stopped well short of sacrificing the Jew in himself to the phil-

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osopher—perhaps because he had perceived that Maimonides's sacrifice, of the philosopher to the Jew, was less than a whole burnt offering.

STRAUSS is also known as the enemy of historicism and of the denial of natural right. There is no better introduction to these matters than a story told by Hans Jonas, a friend of Strauss's from their youth in Germany. Jonas begins his "Contemporary Problems in Ethics from a Jewish Perspective" (*Journal* of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, January 1968) as follows:

> To illustrate the plight of ethics in contemporary philosophy, let me open this paper with a personal reminiscence. When in 1945 I reentered vanquished Germany as a member of the Jewish Brigade in the British army, I had to decide on whom of my former teachers in philosophy I could in good conscience visit, and whom not. It turned out that the "no" fell on my main teacher, perhaps the most original and profound, certainly one of the most influential among the philosophers of this century, who by the criteria which then had to govern my choice had failed the human test of the time; whereas the "yes" included the much lesser figure of a rather narrow traditionalist of Kantian persuasion, who meant little to me philosophically but of whose record in those dark years I heard admirable things. When I did visit him and congratulated him on the courage of his principled stand, he said a memorable thing: "Jonas," he said, "I tell you this: Without Kant's teaching I couldn't have done it." Here was a limited man, but sustained in an honorable course of action by the moral force of an outmoded philosophy; and there was the giant of contemporary thought—not hindered, some even say helped, by his philosophy in joining the cause of evil. The point is that this was more than a private failing, just as the other's better bearing was, by his own avowal, more than a private virtue. The tragedy was that the truly 20th-century thinker of the two, he whose word had stirred the youth of a whole generation after the First World War, had not offered in his philosophy a reason for setting conduct in the noble tradition stemming from Socrates and Plato and ending, perhaps, in Kant.

Heidegger was that giant of contemporary thought. Strauss agreed that he was a giant. Heidegger was also pro-Nazi, and Strauss hated the Nazis not like a philosopher but like the simplest Jew. After the war Strauss ignored Heidegger's overtures and forbade his students to have anything to do with the giant.

In *Natural Right and History* Strauss's critique of Max Weber's value-free social science is of special interest to the social scientist. For the citizen, what Strauss suggests in the introduction is more striking: that few teachers of political science and American government agree with the central proposition of the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." For the Declaration, all hinges on the Creator. How many of us believe in a Creator? A passionate desire for equality, and to some degree for liberty also, remains with us, but it is without a reasoned basis. Suppose that tomorrow the dominant passion is for despotism. Having debarred ourselves from invoking a Creator, what shall we then invoke for liberty and equality and against despotism? Once we deny the Declaration's Creator and "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God," we have nothing left.

Strauss shows that wickedness must ensue from denying natural right. Heidegger's denial led to wickedness, and so did the denial of Hans Kelsen, the most illustrious 20th-century authority on the philosophy of law. In *Natural Right* Kelsen is quoted from his 1925 *Algemeine Staatslehre,* where he expresses impatience with the naive and presumptuous upholders of natural right, who could not see what was so clear to him, that despotism is as legitimate a form of government as any other. (In a blandly lethal footnote, Strauss records that a quarter of a century later Kelsen had not changed his mind about the naiveté and presumption of natural-right thinking. This being so, Strauss asks, what possible reason could Kelsen have had for omitting that passage from the English-language translation, *General Theory of Law and State* [1949]?) Nevertheless, Strauss does not say he has proved that natural right, because desirable, is also real.

THE third thing "everybody" knows about Strauss is that he was conservative. What is conservative? Is it laissez-faire libertarian? Strauss had studied Bible and Maimonides, Plato and Aristotle. In none of these did he find it written that the owner of a coal mine may not be forbidden to employ a pregnant woman to haul laden wagons underground. He despised that kind of conservatism, and its theorists—mostly economists of a certain school.

The guiding instinct of Strauss's conservatism, linked to temperament, family, history, and theory, was this: If it is not necessary to change, then it is necessary not to change. Why should he have thought that change is good? In an unpublished but widely circulated Hillel lecture, he recalled that as a boy he saw his parents and the other Jews of their community taking care of Jewish refugees from Russian pogroms passing through Germany on their way to America. He never thought very highly of Kaiser Wilhelm's character or intellect, but at least he could say for Wilhelm's Germany that it was a *Rechtsstaat,* a state ruled by law: in the Kaiser's empire, un-

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like the Czar's, pogroms were not tolerated. Yet not even the Russian change has been good. After all these years it appears that bad as the Czars' Russia was for Jews, for philosophers and poets, and for the people, the Leninists' Russia has been much worse. As to Germany, Strauss had rather less regard for Weimar than for the Kaiser. Weimar doomed itself, in his view, by being too irresolute and cowardly to wield the sword of the law against its enemies, who had openly sworn to destroy it.

Preferring stability to change is Aristotelian. In the *Politics* 1268b and 1269a, starting from the question whether it is advisable to erect a statue in honor of a political reformer, Aristotle has to ask whether it is better or worse for a *polis* to change the ancestral laws. We have made technological and scientific progress since the days of our grandfathers. Why should there not also be political progress? Our ancestors were the same, ordinary, even foolish human beings that we are: there is nothing divine about what they have bequeathed to us. As a matter of fact, they were more primitive than we, closer to the savage state.

Having said all this, Aristotle does not conclude that the laws should be changed. The crafts and sciences are one thing, the law another. Custom and long usage are the foundation of the law. To change laws is to risk weakening veneration of the law. The Declaration of Independence, a declaration of revolution, does not disagree. Asserting "the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it [sc. 'any Form of Government'], and to institute new Government . . . most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness," the Declaration immediately concedes that "Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes." The Founding Fathers did not dispute the ancients' teaching—that while prudence is not a theoretical virtue it is a practical, or political, virtue.

The ancients thought that the best regime one could reasonably expect, in practice, was an aristocracy. (It was not the best in theory. That was the improbable one in which the philosophers were kings.) For us, now, with education pretty nearly universal, Strauss held that the best regime one can reasonably expect is liberal or constitutional democracy.

Strauss affirms classical conservatism, the doubt about progress. Yet he lets us understand that conservatism is not the last word. Conservatives are not subversive, by definition. Neither are philosophers. Philosophy, however, is subversive, at odds with the loyal citizen's absorption in the *polis*. Then it must be that philosophers are unsubversive only actively.

It is widely accepted that a belief in natural law is conservative, and that that is why the liberal 19th century abandoned the belief. Strauss shows that it was conservatives who abandoned natural law, in reaction against 18th-century revolutionary appeals to it—the Declaration of Independence, the Declaration of the Rights of Man. To natural law, conservatives opposed history: the rights of Englishmen; the laws, customs, and traditions of the Germans. Out of the conservative opposition to natural law arose the Historical School. And out of that opposition arose, by way of the Historical School's development or degeneration into historicism, Heidegger and Kelsen, who, each in his own way, ratified nihilism. Conservatism, unsubversive by definition, could be subversive in fact.

A conservative reveres the tradition and continuity of his country. What he overlooks is that every country was founded, and that every founding was by force and fraud: Romulus and Remus; William the Conqueror (or his Saxon predecessors); the American Revolution. Every continuity begins in discontinuity.

STRAUSS denies, or at least doubts, what we take for granted: that the moderns (Machiavelli, Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, and so on) have superseded the ancients (Plato and Aristotle, mostly) and that that is good. He does not say that the ancients can be reinstated as if the revolution of the moderns had not happened. Modern science, which was originally part of modern philosophy, makes it unlikely that there can be a simple return to ancient philosophy, or philosophies. But a line leads from the abandonment of classical thought to the contemporary political scientists' reserve about the Declaration of Independence. A line leads from Machiavelli to historicism and its dissolution into nihilism or fanaticism, two sides of the same coin; to the greatest philosopher of our time supporting Nazism; to our most illustrious jurisprudent chiding the folly, presumption, and naiveté of those who would refuse legitimacy to despotism.

In 1974 Strauss may be more favorably received than in 1954. At least from *Philosophie und Gesetz* (1935), he was always skeptical of the fundamental modern project (as he called it), first set forth by Bacon: the conquest of nature for the relief of man's estate. To the ancients, theory is separate from and higher than practice. To the moderns, theory is for practice, science is for technology. In the last quarter of the 20th century the conquest of nature is less axiomatically desirable than Strauss could have imagined when he began to question the fundamental modern project. Perhaps the victory of Bacon the practical over Aristotle the theoretical should have been a shade less total? Perhaps there is something to be said for classical sobriety and limited expectation? (Did anyone tell Strauss about Toynbee's chic arraignment of the Bible for aggression against nature?)

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THERE are many excellent teachers. They have students. Strauss had disciples. His disciples are known as Straussians. Straussians of the first generation are those who studied with him, and their students are the second generation. By now there may well be a third generation. Aristotelians are adherents of Aristotelianism, Thomists of Thomism, Marxists of Marxism, Freudians of Freudianism. Straussians call themselves Straussians, but they deny that there is a Straussism. One can see what they mean. Although close to a doctrine, Strauss's teaching is less palpable than those *isms,* less sturdy, less unequivocal as to theory and more renunciatory as to practice. Perhaps the Straussians are constituted not so much by a unifying doctrine as by the direct personal influence of an extraordinary man? That does not account for the second and third generations.

Whether of the first, second, or third generation, a Straussian is or was a young man or woman who loves to think, a reasonable young reader, an intelligent young man or woman. Such a person can respond to Strauss's yes-and-no, no-and-yes, giving and then taking away, taking away and then restoring. For some, the Straussian austerity can be exhilarating. It can be understood as an invitation to join those privileged few who, having ascended from the cave, gaze upon the sun with unhooded eyes, while yet mindful of those others below, in the dark. With grave agreement Strauss quotes Albo, 250 years removed from Maimonides, who calls his master the great eagle that delights to soar upward, ever closer to the sun.

Straussism also helps Straussians to do good work, which they could not do otherwise. As an example, because I have consulted it recently, I offer Allan Bloom and Harry Jaffa's *Shakespeare's Politics,* especially the chapter on the "Merchant of Venice." Not many political scientists are Straussian, but of only the dozen or so articles in the latest issue of the *American Political Science Review* I have seen (March 1974), three, and those not the least interesting, are by Straussians—young, to judge by their rank of assistant professor, and therefore unlikely to have studied under Strauss himself.

In the first Straussian generation there is a fairly high proportion of Jews. The reasons for this are unclear. Of course, by all accounts Strauss was a great teacher. Like his Greek and Jewish masters, "gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche." But there must also have been a political or ideological attraction. Unlike other Jewish students, were the Straussians already conservative, or on the way to becoming conservative? Or did conservatism follow discipleship? There were Left Hegelians. There have been no Left Straussians.

Young and old, Jew and Gentile, all agree that Strauss's being a Jew was at the center of his thought and feeling. At the University of Chicago his lectures at the Hillel Foundation were events. In a university that prided itself on intellectual distinction, he was widely regarded as most distinguished; and this formidable Jew evoked respect for Jewish tradition and existence—not least among the Jews, teachers and students alike. On the whole, Jewish Straussians are still respectful, but still distantly. In general they think religion to be a good thing—politically, of course, and for others: Strauss says that liberal education used to be for gentlemen and religious education for the masses. The philosopher's education began where the gentleman's left off.

If the Jewish Straussians were really serious, if they really thought that what a philosopher says and how he says it and how he appears to the non-philosophical make or should make a difference, would not more of them go to the synagogue? Strauss had stopped going to the synagogue. From his own point of view, should he have? More exactly, should he not have resumed going when he became a master, with disciples? Should he not have offered up a little of that sacrifice—of the philosopher to the Jew in him—that he valued so highly in Maimonides? For the greatest philosopher a noble lie, though inferior to a noble truth, was yet noble.

Strauss was not a believing Jew, but the only religion he could take seriously was Judaism. He himself said that while Judaism—*the* revelation—cannot refute philosophy, neither can philosophy refute Judaism. Philosophy, which rejects faith, is therefore itself a kind of faith. If for him the alternative to philosophy always remained Judaism, that was primarily because he had been brought up in a religious Jewish home. For the children and grandchildren of detached Jewish Straussians, the alternative to philosophy would not be Judaism. For them the alternative would necessarily be Christianity—perhaps by a detour through Eastern religions. Strauss had no difficulty in choosing between Judaism and Christianity, and he wanted the fruitful tension between Judaism/Jerusalem and philosophy/Athens to endure. (His definitive formulation of this, "Jerusalem and Athens," was published in these pages, June 1967.) If this Athenian had lived a more Jerusalemite life, he would have set an even stronger Jewish example than he did. That would not have been inconsistent, or unprincipled. He began to study Maimonides when young and never stopped, to the day of his death. He held that Maimonides was deeper than Spinoza.

WHAT did he achieve, how significant was he? History, as they say, will give the answer. Xenophon's achievement and significance have always been seen as rather limited, but if Strauss's reinterpretation prevails they will be seen differently. One thing is indisputable, that Strauss combined to a preeminent

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degree the qualities that Talmud scholarship knows as those of the *baqi* and of the *harif*—the first, of copious, wide, deep, and exact knowledge; the second, of sharp and subtle analytical prowess. I have counted more than thirty authors that he treats at some length, from antiquity to the 20th century—and such authors! (And always read in their own languages—in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, Italian, English, French, and his native German.) He may have been the most learned man of our time in the great writings that it is worth being learned in, of poets and historians as well as philosophers; and to his learning were joined acuteness, penetration, intuition, zest, and a certain serious playfulness.

In St. John's College, Annapolis, where Strauss was scholar in residence, a young man spoke *in memoriam:*

> Once, when our conversation ended with Mr Strauss counseling me to make good use of my youth by studying, I asked for . . . the subjects worthy of the most study. . . . Mr. Strauss suggested a curriculum built around the study of four books. True to form, he named only three of them—Aristotle's *Ethics,* Aquinas's *Treatise on Law,* and Kant's *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals.* . . .

What the wise man says to each who may have it in him to become a seeker after wisdom depends on the particular constitution and needs of each soul. Strauss's enumeration of the books is true to form. His choice is enigmatic. Why Aristotle when Strauss loved Plato more, and which of the books on ethics? Aquinas because the young man is a Christian, or of a Christian family? Why Kant, when Strauss probably agreed with his friend Jonas that Kant's philosophy is outmoded?

What is the mysterious unnamed book? Hardly the Bible. Something by Machiavelli, I suggest, perhaps the *Discourses.* Strauss professes to be shocked by Machiavelli's shamelessness, but it is Strauss who reminds us that shamelessness is a moral or practical vice, not an intellectual or theoretical one. He even reminds us that shamelessness, like impiety, is absent from Aristotle's list of the moral vices.

Strauss tells us that the classical political philosophers teach about the governance of an established *polis,* while Machiavelli teaches about the founding of a city or a dynasty. A founder is superior to an inheritor. But who is a founder? Moses was a founder. Long before him, the first pharaoh was a founder. How about the Egyptian who expelled the alien Hyksos rulers and reestablished—refounded—a native Egyptian pharaohnate? Was he not in his way as much a founder as the pharaoh who founded the first dynasty? For Machiavelli, just as the ruler who has founded a city or a dynasty is superior to other rulers, so must the thinker who has founded the doctrine about the founding of cities and dynasties be superior to other thinkers. Machiavelli was a founder—of modern political thought. I am persuaded that Strauss regarded himself, and was confident that future generations would regard him, as a refounder: the thinker who expelled (who undermined the taken-for-granted superiority of) the alien, intrusive teaching that had conquered political thought, and who restored, partly, the authentic, classical teaching or teachings. Could Strauss have been a secret Machiavellian? In any event, by the Machiavellian equation he can regard himself as not inferior to Machiavelli, the founder of the modern teaching. By the same equation he may even regard himself as not altogether inferior to Socrates—Socrates!—the founder of the classical teachings.

It is fitting to conclude by reverting to Strauss the Jew, the German Jew. In *Philosophie und Gesetz* he takes credit for telling Franz Rosenzweig the story about Hermann Cohen that Rosenzweig made famous: how Cohen once explained his God-idea to an Orthodox Jew; how the Jew then asked, And what about *bore' 'olam,* the Creator of the world?; and how Cohen's only answer was to weep. Strauss was a friend of Gershom Scholem and Ernst Simon, who went up from Germany to Jerusalem fifty years ago (and are among the few contemporaries, along with Harry Austryn Wolfson, he cites in his footnotes). One difference between him and them was that his family was Orthodox, unassimilated, small-town provincial. This may help to explain why, unlike Rosenzweig and even some German Jewish Marxists, he was never impressed or attracted by Christianity.

In being as Jewish as he was, and as conservative, Strauss was wholly distinct from those we think of when we think of Weimar culture or the intellectual migration: no chapter is devoted to him in the books about these. Of high degree in the culture and the migration was the Institut für Sozialforschung, the so-called Frankfurt School, which included such luminaries as Franz Neumann, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer. Martin Jay, the author of the *Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research,* tells us ("Anti-Semitism and the Weimar Left," *Midstream,* January 1974) that the members of this brilliant and admired school, and especially the inner circle, mostly "came from Jewish backgrounds." Even after the war these brilliant men continued to deny the intensity, and almost the existence, of pre-war German anti-Semitism! Anyway, they knew that anti-Semitism was not especially important, a symptom of something about capitalism; or else that it was a capitalistic device. Always they insisted that their Jewish backgrounds had nothing to do with their politics, or their school, or their dialectical imagination. In short, they used their brilliance to blind themselves to the most obvious facts.

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To those who are moved by the exhortation, "change the world" does not mean "change the world for the worse." A Marxism that is not optimistic about the unity of theory and practice is a contradiction in terms. Yet toward the end, while Adorno had not renounced Marxist theory, he had renounced optimism about Marxist practice. His death was hastened by a Marxist woman student's lewd, jeering, cruel, public humiliation of the old Marxist philosopher and teacher, in his lecture hall.

Strauss, a Socratic, was not an optimist even as to theory. His health had long been frail. When he died, he was still learning and still teaching, encompassed by a more than filial reverence and care. "Honor is the portion of the wise" (Proverbs 3:35).

For a Greek Jew, or a Jewish Greek, something from Aristotle (*Nichomachean Ethics* 1100b-1101a) may be an equally suitable epitaph:

> . . . no one of the blessed could become wretched. For he will never do hateful or base things . . . since, in our opinion, the truly good and wise man bears all vicissitudes in a fitting manner . . . ever acting most nobly. . . .

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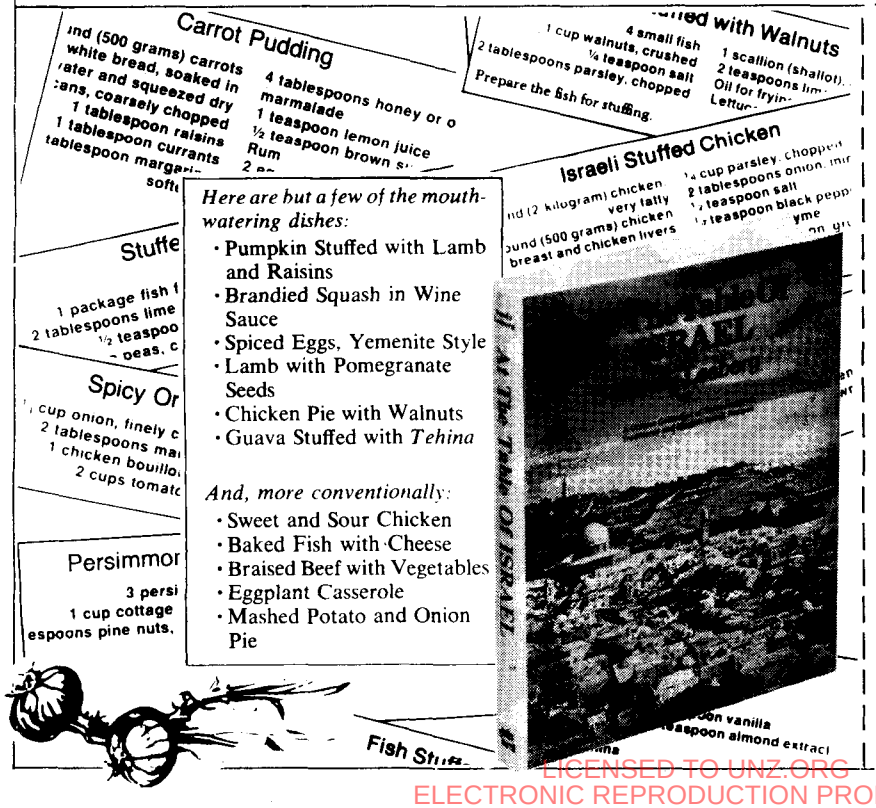
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A New View of Slavery

TIME ON THE CROSS: THE ECONOMICS OF AMERICAN NEGRO SLAVERY. By ROBERT WILLIAM FOGEL and STANLEY L. ENGERMAN. *Little, Brown. 286 pp. $8.95.*

TIME ON THE CROSS: EVIDENCE AND METHODS—A SUPPLEMENT. By ROBERT WILLIAM FOGEL and STANLEY L. ENGERMAN. *Little, Brown. 267 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by NATHAN GLAZER

THE main themes of *Time on the Cross* are already familiar: they have been presented in book reviews, in newspaper reports, in television programs. Fogel and Engerman have reexamined all the material available on the economics of Negro slavery, and they, together with their students and other scholars, have also collected, from original sources, new bodies of material on the economics of the plantation, the operations of the slave market, the impact of slavery on the Negro family, and the like. They list thirteen such bodies of material now available in "machine-readable" form, meaning that computations can be performed on them, different hypotheses tested, refined, rejected, and accepted, in a way that was simply not possible before the use of computers to perform operations on historical data. These bodies of data include material on tens of thousands of farms taken from the manuscript schedules of the censuses of 1850 and 1860, probate records on 80,000 slaves, invoices on sales of 5,000 slaves in New Orleans, and so forth. As Fogel and Engerman write:

> . . . the traditional interpretation of slavery has been under intensive critical review for almost a decade and a half by historians and economists who are trained in the application of quantitative methods to historical problems. This review involves the processing of large quantities of numerical data. Although these data have been available for some time, the techniques required to analyze and interpret them systematically were not perfected until after the close of World War II. Then a series of rapid advances in economics statistics, and applied mathematics, together with the availability of high-speed computers, put information long locked in obscure archives at the disposal of a new generation of scholars.

Despite the awesome apparatus of theory and technology that has been brought to bear on this problem, and the thoroughness of the research (398 references are listed in the *Supplement*), the conclusions are simple and can be easily summarized. Slavery was an economically rational and successful system of production. It was not kept in force by economically irrational factors, such as the prestige involved in owning many slaves, or the desire of white plantation owners to lead a gracious life (or, if these were factors in the survival of slavery, they are not needed to explain its continuance, for slavery was profitable). Slavery was "not inefficient compared with free agriculture. Economies of large-scale production, operation, effective management, and intensive utilization of labor and capital made Southern slave agriculture 35 per cent more efficient than the Northern system of family farming." Further: "The typical slave field hand was not lazy, inept, and unproductive. On average he was harder-working and more efficient than his white counterpart." Further: "The course of slavery in the cities does not prove that slavery was incompatible with an industrial system or that slaves were unable to cope with an industrial regimen. . . ." Further: "The belief that slave-breeding, sexual exploitation, and promiscuity destroyed the black family is a myth. . . . It was to the economic interest of planters to encourage the stability of slave families and most of them did so. Most slave sales were either of whole families or of individuals . . . at an age when it would have been normal for them to have left the family." And further: "The material . . . conditions of the lives of slaves compared favorably with those of free industrial workers."

Some of the results are indeed surprising, and yet they are not likely to be challenged, one would think, for some time except for detail, in view of the enormous work and great ability that have gone into this research effort. (Fogel, the senior author, is Professor of Economics and History at the University of Chicago, Taussig Research Professor in Economics at Harvard for 1973-74, and will be Pitt Professor of American History and Institutions at Cambridge University in 1975-76; he is the author of a highly regarded study on the role of railroads in American economic development which also came out with surprising results. He is also the only historian ever elected to the National Academy of Sciences.)

To consider some of the surprising details: if we take the evidence of biological survival, it turns out that slaves did *best* in the United States. The United States took only 6 per cent of all slave imports to the Western Hemisphere between 1500 and 1870; but in 1825 it had 36 per cent of the slaves in the hemisphere. If the experience of slaves in the United States had duplicated that of slaves in the West Indies or Brazil, the black population of the United States would have been only a small fraction of what it is today. In the West Indies and Brazil the number of slaves was maintained by imports, and there was a natural decrease, not increase, of their number based on the ratio of births to deaths. This reflected the fact that outside the United States it was cheaper to import new slaves rather than permit or maintain the conditions that enabled the growth to maturity of slave children.

It should be made clear that

NATHAN GLAZER *is professor of education and social structure at Harvard and a regular contributor to these pages. Mr. Glazer's most recent book is* Remembering the Answers.

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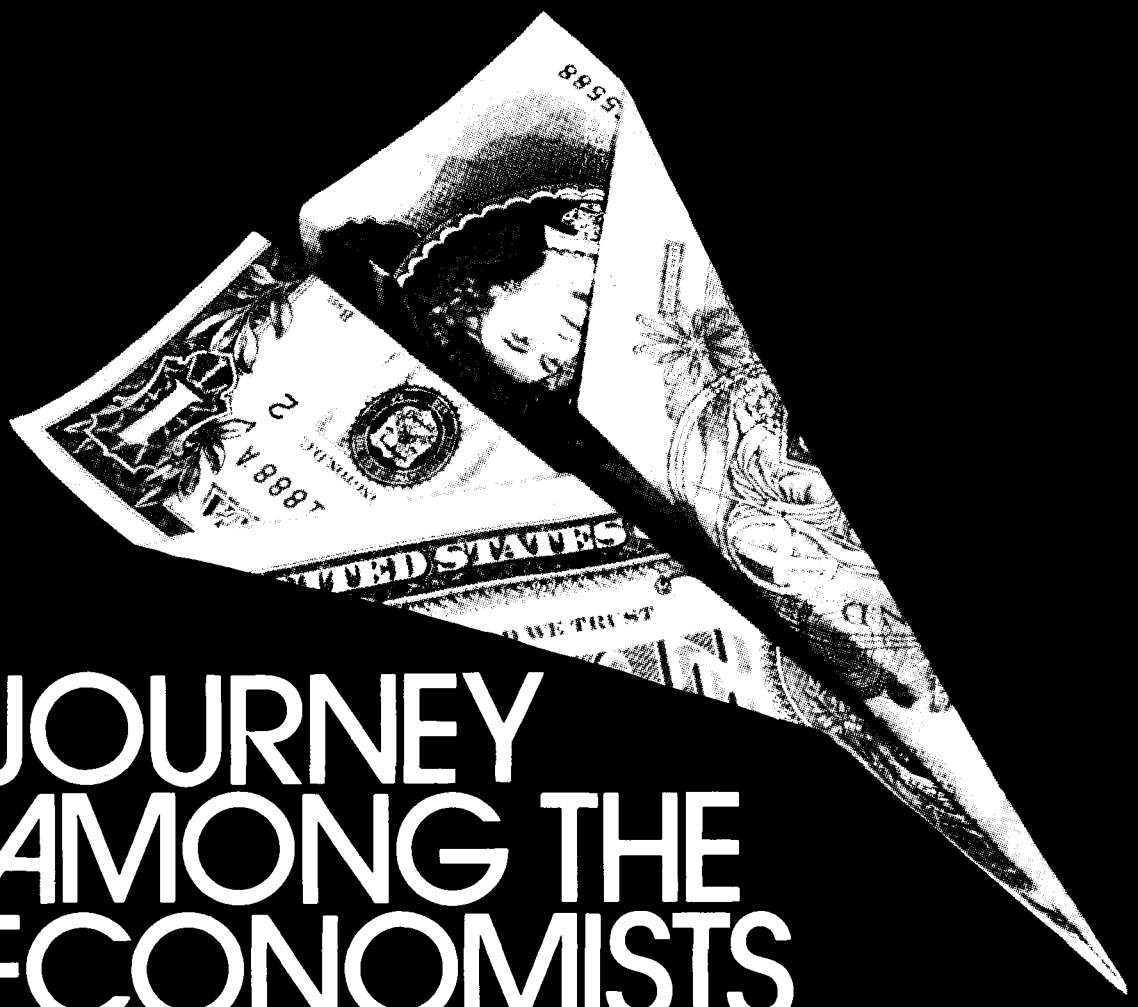

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by Arrigo Levi

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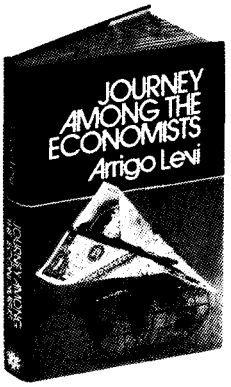

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Fogel and Engerman do not enter into the extensive debate that began with Frank Tannenbaum's *Slave and Citizen* in 1947 and was given new life by Stanley Elkins's *Slavery* in 1959 on the comparison of the characteristics of slavery in the United States and the rest of the Americas as a result of different systems of law, religion, and morality. In this debate, from the perspective of the relative morality and humanity of the various slave systems, and their impact on subsequent racial relations, Latin America began with a large advantage over the United States. Fogel and Engerman, concentrating on economics rather than law, religion, and social relations, turn the tables in favor of the United States. But it is clear the "superiority" in the treatment of slaves in the United States is, from their point of view, based solely on economic considerations by slaveholders. Either the economics of slavery were different in the West Indies and Brazil, and thus led to an objectively crueler situation for slaves —in terms of their chances for survival and reproduction; or the slaveholders of those areas were not as rational as slaveholders in the United States. I would suspect Fogel and Engerman would be happier with the first interpretation.

In any case, after *Time on the Cross* it can hardly be argued that the Negro family was destroyed by slavery in the United States while being maintained by the slave systems of Latin America because of royal and church protection and the traditions of a pre-capitalist society. Quite the opposite seems to be the case, and this is perhaps the most surprising of the Fogel-Engerman findings. Thus, it has long been held that slaves in the Old South were bred for export to the New South. This interregional trade, Fogel and Engerman assert, was very small: most slaves migrated to the New South along with their masters, as complete families. The largest center for the interregional slave trade was New Orleans. There does seem on the surface to have been a good deal of trade in young children: "9.3 per cent of the New Orleans sales were of children under thirteen." But "this could easily have been explained by orphans." They argue that slave families were quite stable, and emphasize the fact that average age of first birth was a high 22.5 years. This, in a well fed population ("the energy value of their diet exceeded that of free men . . . by more than 10 per cent"). The infant death rate of Southern slaves was virtually the same as that of Southern whites, suggesting not only that conditions for health were equivalent, but that slave maternal care was good.

But now the question arises: What does it all mean? Why should a reinterpretation of the economic value of slavery be of such great interest and importance? What I have in mind is not what this means for traditional history, or for the conventional understanding of the economics of slavery, but what the *implications* of these findings are for our understanding of the position of blacks in the United States, the responsibility of whites for that condition, and the prospects of future relations between the races in the United States. No investigation into the Negro past or present in the United States is without political implications—and Fogel-Engerman understand that well. Consider two such issues that have not remained the preserve of scholars. One is of course the question of the Negro family and the interpretation of the high rates of female-headed families and children born to unmarried mothers that have been apparent in recent decades. As we well know in view of the controversy that followed Daniel P. Moynihan's report on the Negro family, it was not possible to contain this as an issue of either historical or sociological scholarship. There are possible policy implications in any findings, and findings are therefore in some sense weapons. Similarly, there has been a certain amount of discussion and there is increasing research (also using quantitative methods) on the contrasts and similarities in the economic, social, and political careers of Negroes and white immigrant groups in this country. Once again, discussion of this issue has had to proceed with great caution: findings may be weapons. And so with Fogel-Engerman on slavery.

But the issue is—what kind of weapon, and in whose hands? And here matters become very confused indeed. The same findings can be used for different political purposes, and the assumption that has dominated so much of the reaction to scholarly work on blacks—that we know or can project what the political effect of a finding will be —has often turned out to be false. Thus, for a long time it was assumed that evidence on the conditions of the black slum areas would lead to greater public action to alleviate those conditions. If the conditions portrayed were so bad, it was argued (this seemed to be the reasoning of much television journalism), then the shame would be greater, the guilt greater, the redress greater. But of course just the opposite reaction was also possible: if conditions were so bad, nothing could be done, or the fault that the reporter wished to ascribe to the system was shifted by the observer to the individual. Sometimes a specific intention was actually subverted. Moynihan's report, it was just about forgotten in the dispute that followed it, was issued when he was with the Department of *Labor*, and called of course for the strengthening of the Negro family through a program "to eliminate poverty" by jobs and income. This, if it was ever noticed, was immediately ignored. The aim, it was charged, of a report titled "The Case for National Action," was to make a case for *no* action.

Much the same thing could be said about the argument over the comparison of the Negro and the white immigrant: it could cut both ways. If the Negro was like the immigrant, then we could be optimistic about his more or less rapid incorporation into the American polity and society with the help of certain useful programs. On the other hand, an opposite conclusion could also be drawn: if he was like the immigrant, why did he need any special programs at all? And opposing implications for action could also be drawn from the opposite conclusion, that the Negro was not like the immigrant: either massive social intervention was necessary to improve his posi-

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tion, or—as in the case of the black slum and family—it was "their" fault and "we" didn't have to bother.

I UNDERTAKE this recounting of old stories not to suggest that Fogel-Engerman will suffer for their research (they may or may not) but rather to suggest there is an inevitable ambiguity in what the truth, as scholars recover it, implies as to *any* course of action, as to *any* existing reality. Fogel and Engerman undertook their research with the same scholarly passion that characterized Fogel's iconoclastic analysis of the role of railroads in American economic development. But whereas the latter study could only arouse debates among economic historians (one doubts whether even the railroad operators cared anymore), the present work has already aroused a larger and more confused debate, because far more people will feel that the conclusions say something about them, their values, their fate, their country, their political stances.

Whatever contemporary implications may be drawn from *Time on the Cross*, there is no reason to think they *necessarily* follow from an ambiguous mass of data which refuses, like the Delphic oracle, to speak in clear language as to larger meaning. And thus we must resist any assertion that Fogel-Engerman "intended" to rehabilitate the white South, or American society, or to show that slavery was "better" than people think it was. First of all we should listen tc their own view of contemporary implications:

> During the past decade we frequently presented papers to scholarly conferences or to faculty colloquia . . . on various aspects of our research into the economics of slavery. Sometimes, after the end of a discussion, one of our colleagues would come up to us with a nervous smile, ask, "What are you guys trying to do? Sell slavery?" We answered: "No. And even if we were, you wouldn't buy it. No one would buy it."

Nevertheless, one necessary implication of rehabilitating the Negro past as they have done is also to rehabilitate to some extent the American South and American so-

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ciety. If the slaves were such good workers and parents, it was because conditions in the United States—as against Brazil and the West Indies—permitted them to be so. Another implication is to shift the emphasis in the kind of rehabilitation of the Negro past that black and other historians have been recently engaged in. The main line of this other kind of rehabilitation has been to emphasize slave revolts, slave resistance, slave sabotage. If the evidence for slave revolts was thin—it was, compared with the record of Brazil, for example—then these historians argued that the laziness, stealing, and malingering of the slaves was a form of underground resistance. Fogel-Engerman accept the evidence that the record of rebellion is very scanty (as is the evidence for suicide), but *deny* that the slave was a poor or unwilling worker. They are forced to this conclusion by their evidence, and hope to make of it something that present-day blacks can take pride in. But one must be skeptical whether this rehabilitation based on the best evidence will satisfy many blacks. Would not black pride demand a history of slave rebels rather than one of good slave workers with stable families?

But it would be premature to take Fogel-Engerman too eagerly as a rehabilitation of the Southern treatment of slaves—even if a treatment based on rational economic calculation—for there is more coming from the cliometricians which will throw quite a different light on white treatment of slaves. If the black slave had good health, a strong family, good working skills and capacities, managerial skills (many slaves managed farms and plantations), then what happened afterward? The rehabilitation of the slave-owning South can only lead to the unveiling of a post-Civil War record in both South and North that reduced the Negro, in all measurable ways, *below* the level he had achieved under slavery. And as a matter of fact, this record is now being compiled by the same methods that were used to change our view of slavery. As Fogel and Engerman write:

> One of the worst consequences of the traditional interpretation of slavery is that it has diverted attention from the attack on the material conditions of black life that took place during the decades following the end of the Civil War. By exaggerating the severity of slavery, all that has come after it has been made to appear as an improvement over previous conditions. The relatively low levels of wages of freed blacks, the relatively low-skill composition of the black labor force, the relatively poor condition of black health, the relative shortness of black life expectations—these and other conditions of the post-Civil War decades have been explained largely as the unfortunate inheritance of the era of slavery. While many have recognized that obstacles continued to be placed in the path of blacks struggling for self-improvement, it has been widely assumed that the primary factors in the slow pace of progress were the disabilities with which blacks emerged from slavery. Only time would overcome the lack of black skills and the unfortunate habits toward work and morality inculcated in blacks by the conditions of slavery. Whatever blame there was for the unsatisfactory conditions of blacks after the Civil War thus rested with a class which no longer existed (the master class) or, unfortunately, with blacks themselves.
>
> During the last few years, the attention of cliometricians has begun to shift from the antebellum to the postbellum era. While the findings thus far are extremely tentative, the evidence that is beginning to accumulate suggests that the attack on the material conditions of the life of blacks after the Civil War was not only more ferocious, but, in certain respects, more cruel than that which preceded it. It appears that the life expectations of blacks declined by 10 per cent between the last quarter century of the antebellum era and the last two decades of the 19th century. The diet of blacks deteriorated. Studies of the diet of black sharecroppers in the mid-1890's indicate that they were protein- and vitamin-starved. The health of blacks deteriorated. Sickness rates in the 1890's were 20 per cent higher than on slave plantations. The skill composition of the black labor force deteriorated. Blacks were squeezed out of some crafts in which they had been heavily represented during the slave era and were prevented from entering the new crafts that arose with the changing technology of the last half of the 19th century and the first half of 20th. The gap between wage payments to blacks and whites in comparable occupations increased steadily from the immediate post-Civil War decades down to the eve of World War II.

In other words: those who are ready to enter this debate on the basis of brief summary, and either to condemn Fogel-Engerman for showing the slave was better off than we believed, or to take delight in their demonstration that the white South was not as bad as we believed, should withhold their condemnation or approval. After Fogel-Engerman—we are being warned—there comes Herbert Gutman with his sobering story of the destruction of the black family in the post-Civil War North. What this teaches us is that we should be cautious in making use of scholarship for politics. The two are indeed different realms. This brilliant book should be taken as what it is: an uncovering of a further measure of historical truth. The bearing of this truth on contemporary social reality and action is too complex for easy debates and the scoring of simple points, and we do scholarship of this quality no favor when we force it to unravel the present and the future, as well as the past.

American Jews

THE FUTURE OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN AMERICA. Edited by DAVID SIDORSKY. *Basic Books. 324 pp. $11.95.*

Reviewed by ALAN MINTZ

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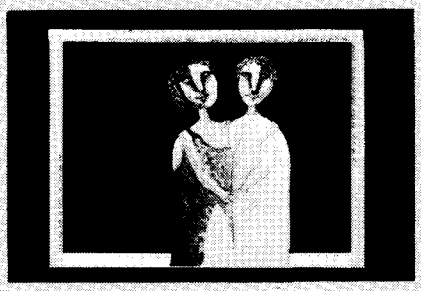

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other. The current volume collects papers presented to the commission studying the last of these areas: the American Jewish community itself.

The book begins with a conceptual and historical introduction to the situation of American Jews. In an excellent synthesizing essay David Sidorsky, the volume's editor, traces the successive "revolutions of modernity"—scientific methodology and psychological individualism, in particular—which Judaism has had to come up against and eventually accommodate itself to. Nathan Rotenstreich follows the changing fortunes of the Jews after their emancipation in Western Europe and clarifies the European provenance of a number of ideas Americans take for granted: the rule of law, equal rights, the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the notion of a universal human sphere as separate from the private sphere of religious conduct. Ben Halpern explores the career of the Zionist idea in the American Jewish imagination and the ways in which that idea was affected by the creation of the state of Israel and its subsequent political fortunes.

The core of the collection is a series of essays describing the current characteristics of the community and its institutions. Sidney Goldstein offers a comprehensive and lucid analysis of the demographic patterns of American Jewry in terms of fertility, migration, marriage patterns, suburbanization, age distribution, education, and occupation. Just how "Jewish" American Jews are, how many of them "identify" as Jews and to what degree, are questions worked through by Charles Liebman in an attempt to draw a picture of the various levels at which Jews affiliate with the community. The synagogue and the school, the central institutions of the community, are submitted to analysis by Wolfe Kelman and Walter Ackerman, and the significance of the youth culture for the Jewish community is discussed skeptically by Mortimer Ostow and sympathetically by James Sleeper. Seymour Fox, in a theoretical statement, argues that the impoverished condition of Jewish education is due not only to lack of finances but also to a lack of direction on such fundamental matters as God, religious law, and Israel. Finally, Daniel Elazar contributes an impressive survey of how the community governs itself and how its decisions are made.

This is undoubtedly a valuable book. Although there is little that is new, the material is presented in a consistently intelligent way which manages to incorporate quantities of hard data without distracting the reader from the focus of the analysis. The inclusion of several exhaustive and definitive essays—on demographic patterns, on Jewish education, on communal structure—gives this collection some of the qualities of a handbook. Each reader will no doubt regret the absence of certain subjects—I, for one, would like to have seen serious treatments of the Jewish family, the place of women in Jewish life, and the state of Jewish culture and scholarship—but with the regrettable exception of Mortimer Ostow's cantankerous and reductive observations on youthful dissent, there can be little quarrel with the responsibility which generally characterizes the volume.

Amid such an abundance of information and perspectives, can one catch here the emerging outlines of a new self-portrait of American Jewry? Had a project such as this been undertaken ten years ago its main focus would undoubtedly have been on the twin issues of assimilation and survival. The overriding concern would have been intermarriage, the overriding question whether, in the space of a few generations, there would be an American Jewry left at all. On these scores the contributors to *The Future of the Jewish Community in America* reflect a demonstrable lessening of anxiety. Wolfe Kelman, for example, reports that between 1950 and 1970 the number of synagogue-affiliates claimed by the major congregational groups jumped from 1,260 to 5,330; tied to this expansion, Walter Ackerman tells us, is the fact that 70 per cent of all Jewish children between the ages of eight and twelve now attend some sort of Jewish school. Involvement with Israel has also magnified impressively during this same period, not just in the amounts of money raised but in the numbers of people actively engaged in Israel-related projects. In general, we are told, 70 per cent of American Jews are either directly affiliated with the Jewish community or use its services; 20 per cent, while aloof from the organized community, nevertheless openly identify as Jews and associate largely with other Jews; only the remaining few have assimilated to the point "where Jewish birth is incidental to them in every respect." Finally, it seems that the great bugaboo of the Jewish communal imagination may be laid to rest: "The net effect of intermarriages on the overall size of the Jewish population," Sidney Goldstein reports, "may not yet be as serious demographically as suggested by several Jewish community studies."

Occasionally, however, a note of desperation and uncertainty breaks the surface. Thus, Walter Ackerman, a Conservative educator, admits that the three-day-a-week school characteristic of this movement cannot report happy results:

> Although close to 50 per cent of the instructional time is devoted to the study of Hebrew and Bible, the pupil graduates from the school with only the most infantile notions of biblical thought and ideas, and a capability in Hebrew which hardly goes beyond monosyllabic responses to carefully worded questions. The study of history is a pious wish. . . . Understanding and generalization fall prey to the hurried accumulation of disconnected fact. The rate of continuation beyond the elementary level in the afternoon school is the lowest of all types of school and is a significant index of its ineffectiveness.

Charles Liebman, after carefully measuring the degree and variety of Jewish identification among American Jews, concludes that

> at least until we enter a post-modern world, the Jew who wishes to remain in the United States, but who is also committed to the survival of Judaism, has no alternative but to retreat into a far more sectarian posture than has up to this time characterized American Jewish life.

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And James Sleeper, from a personal point of view, documents the disconnection of young suburban Jews from Jewish experience and culture.

OBVIOUSLY there are two impulses here, pulling hard in opposite directions. Those who in confident terms record the expansion of American Jewish life attest to a phenomenon which on closer observation is essentially organizational. The statistics reflect a rise in institutional affiliation: more synagogue members, more UJA volunteers, more Hadassah workers, more contributors to Federation. In these terms the community has indeed a rich and complex life, the very extensiveness of which should allay fears of the precariousness of Jewish identity in America. But against this is the tendency of some observers to oppose the sufficiency of "group" identity to a significant involvement with Judaism and thereby to judge American Jewry by its success or failure in encouraging Jewish culture and promoting Jewish practice. These critics ask about Jewish literature, observance of Sabbath and the holidays, knowledge of the Hebrew language and the classical Jewish texts, and so forth. And by these criteria they find the community to be in *serious* trouble.

It is one of the less fortunate aspects of *The Future of the Jewish Community in America* that this division of perspective should hardly be brought to consciousness. For increasingly it is a split that seems to characterize the community as a whole. The vast expanse of organized Jewish life continues to absorb both the traditional Jew whose commitment has frayed and the assimilated Jew whose alienation has turned out to be a dead end. At the same time, the past few years have seen the rise of a small but forceful elite which is far better educated than any previous generation of American Jewish leaders. With the growth of yeshivas and day schools, university programs of Jewish studies, independent synagogues and *havurot,* educational summer camps, student newspapers and magazines, study-years in Israel, the conditions at least have begun to exist for the stimulating of a vital Jewish culture in America.

Now, clearly it is the great organizations and movements in American Judaism which have themselves spawned the committed few, but relations between the two forces have by and large been characterized by uncertainty and vacillation—from affection to disdain and back again. One may hope that future efforts in critical self-understanding on the part of the Jewish community will pay greater attention to this vexed yet important area, for in the interaction between the organized community and its critics lie the real materials out of which the future will be built.

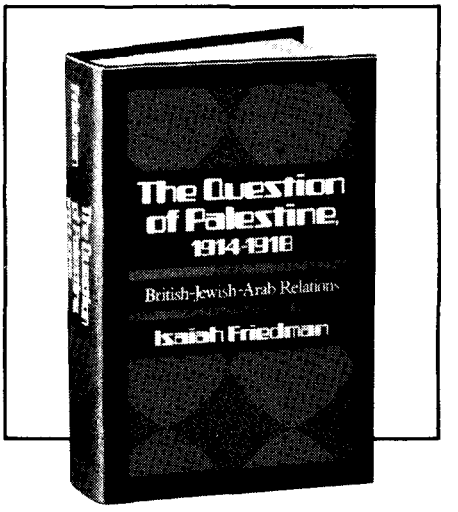
Writing About Women

SEDUCTION AND BETRAYAL: WOMEN AND LITERATURE. By ELIZABETH HARDWICK. *Random House. 208 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by JOHN W. ALDRIDGE

ELIZABETH HARDWICK'S new collection of essays, all first published in the *New York Review of Books,* is a work of diverse and contradictory features. It is by turns, and often on the same page, both brilliant and opaque, wise and fatuous, perplexing for qualities which may represent either virtues of restraint or failures of imagination, and containing some of the best and worst writing she has ever done. Miss Hardwick examines her subject in terms of a limited and seemingly arbitrary selection of female characters in literature and women who were practicing writers or intimately associated with distinguished literary men. Her opening essay on the Brontë sisters consists largely of biographical description—a critical method for which, together with plot summary, she has rather too facile a gift—and says nothing of particular interest about these remarkable women except that, given the adverse condi-

JOHN W. ALDRIDGE, *professor of English at the University of Michigan, is the author, most recently, of* The Devil in the Fire: Retrospective Essays on American Literature and Culture, 1951-1971.



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tions of the Haworth environment and the limited opportunities open to 19th-century women of their class and type, writing was for them a refuge from the austerities of the world and quite literally their sole means of psychic survival.

Miss Hardwick is considerably better than this in her discussions of Ibsen's women; in fact, she is excellent. The essays on *Hedda Gabler, A Doll's House*, and *Rosmersholm* are, in spite of their overattentiveness to the mechanics of plot, among the very best in the book. In them she creates a perspective which enables her to present the heroines of these plays as in part the victims of social forces oppressive to women, but at the same time as individuals with personal weaknesses that may transcend their sexual roles and finally create the terms of their self-victimization. Miss Hardwick understands the importance of moral and psychological flaw in the establishment of tragic authenticity, and she wisely avoids the programmatic feminist approach which would reduce complex human situations to instances of merely sexist domination and martyrdom.

This same perspective distinguishes the fine studies of Zelda Fitzgerald and Sylvia Plath, two women whom it has become a feminist convention to treat hagiographically, with an oftentimes militant disregard for those qualities of the demonic and suicidal which doomed them both to become martyrs to no cause but their own psychoses. Miss Hardwick quite rightly sees Zelda as a woman of undoubtedly large creative potential who may have been severely damaged by the life she and Scott chose to live, and was perhaps as much his victim as he was hers, yet who may, in fact, have achieved what little she did achieve as an artist just because she was driven by her marriage into competition with him. Miss Hardwick also quite rightly finds terrifying the more vicious of the Plath poems, particularly those attacking the poet's long-dead father, not because she is impressed by their justice as indictments but, on the contrary, because they seem, in the very excess of their brutality to any conceivable hurt inflicted by the father, the expression of a mind out of control and raging for revenge against itself.

By contrast, Miss Hardwick seems, in her essay on Bloomsbury and Virginia Woolf, to flounder badly. One senses throughout it a quality of strain, a struggle for definition and perception, above all, for a means of coming to terms with material which, as Miss Hardwick admits, has been overly documented in recent years but which is also somehow intellectually uncongenial to her. The result is that she engages neither Bloomsbury nor Virginia Woolf and is reduced to meandering in search of a thesis from observation to observation about people and places: Lady Ottoline and her house, Garsington; Clive, Vanessa, and Quentin Bell; the painter, Mark Gertler; Lytton Strachey and his love life; the sexual liaisons of Bloomsbury; Leonard Woolf; Vita Sackville-West; and Harold Nicolson. The essay finally lodges on the point of Virginia Woolf's "androgyny" and seems for a moment to be about to crescendo there. But Miss Hardwick merely observes that "'Androgyny' is a way of bringing into line the excessive, almost smothering 'femininity' of the fiction of a feminist like Virginia Woolf." Unfortunately, Miss Hardwick manages by the end to bring nothing into line. She simply wanders away, muttering frustratedly to herself.

In her discussions of Dorothy Wordsworth and Jane Carlyle, Miss Hardwick is again strikingly uneven. She says little that is fresh or important about Dorothy, who was, to be sure, an elusive and enigmatic figure, but in contrast to her performance on Virginia Woolf, what she has to say is said very clearly and directly. The essay on Jane Carlyle is far better, perhaps because Jane was a much more open and dynamic woman, and Miss Hardwick writes about her with a strong effect of personal identification and with very great sympathy and conviction.

It is considerably to her credit that Miss Hardwick has been able to deal with this subject in these times without once raising her voice in the shrill, sanctimonious keening that is the normal accompaniment of feminist declarations. Her approach throughout these essays is judicious and fair-minded, and there is a decent reticence to assign responsibility in her treatment of the extremely complicated question of the influences that shaped and, on occasion, destroyed the lives of the women she examines. Yet such qualities in a work of this kind inevitably have their ambiguous aspect. There are moments when it is unclear whether Miss Hardwick is holding back from making a point or is at a loss to find a point to make. Furthermore, since her method is, for the most part, descriptive rather than analytical and almost entirely lacking in generalizing dimension, it is often very difficult to decide how to interpret or evaluate the situations she discusses. If the condition of women in society, as reflected in history and literature, is in fact her subject, then what precisely is she trying to tell us about it? What are the implications which, out of fastidiousness or imperfect understanding, she has left unstated? That the accomplishments of women have been made at the cost of immense suffering, frustration, and even at times their sanity? That the actions and attitudes of men have been primarily responsible? That the women she discusses are illustrative cases?

Yet of this group only the Brontë sisters appear to represent instances of women whose creative ambitions were directly compensatory for their position in society. And even at that there would seem to be small cause for lamentation in the fact that they may have been socially victimized into producing such works as *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. Dorothy Wordsworth and Jane Carlyle, both of whom may have had some literary talent, gave over their lives to the care and encouragement of great men. Yet there is nothing to indicate that they saw this as sacrifice and much to indicate that they found their fulfillment, to say nothing of their place in history, through the creativity they so devotedly helped to sustain. It seems

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equally clear that the difficulties of Zelda Fitzgerald and Sylvia Plath were, before all else, psychological. While it is perfectly true that Zelda, particularly in the early stages of her breakdown, was mistreated by Scott, it is also true that he was badly damaged by her. Nevertheless, they fed creatively on each other, quite literally exploited their relationship as subject-matter for their writing, and achieved what they did through a kind of desperate masochistic collaboration. Sylvia Plath was a mentally disturbed person rather than a socially victimized woman, and what is striking about her is the extent to which she concerned herself with the conventional roles and expectations which women who are not artists or intellectuals allow to dominate their lives. She seems never to have understood that she was under no obligation to conform to these stereotypes, and the fact that she felt compelled to try is a commentary not so much on society as on the precariousness of her psychological balance. Miss Hardwick may or may not have had these considerations in mind during the writing of this book. But she does not engage them directly, nor does she indicate that she perceives them as being among the possible implications of her material.

This opacity or evasiveness becomes particularly disturbing in the title essay which, since it is placed at the end of the collection, might seem to have been intended as a concluding statement of thesis or summation of argument but is in fact neither. Instead, the essay reads like a lengthy preamble or an overextended marshaling of data in support of an argument which is never discovered. Miss Hardwick examines in considerable detail and often very perceptively several women characters in fiction who suffer seduction and betrayal by men. Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*, Hetty Sorrel in *Adam Bede*, Roberta Alden in *An American Tragedy*, Maslova in Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, Richardson's Clarissa, and Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles are all brought forward to enforce a point that

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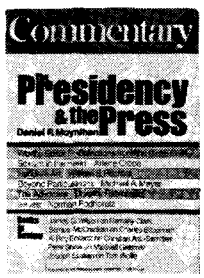

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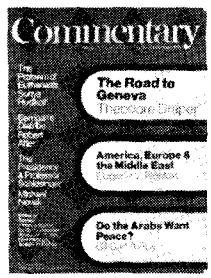

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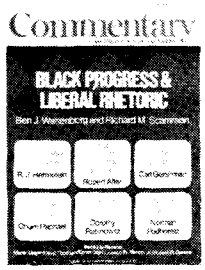

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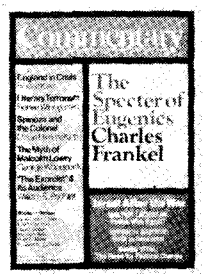

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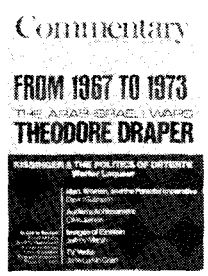

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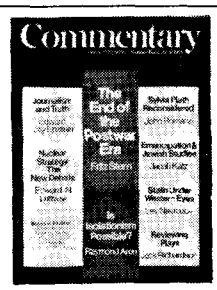

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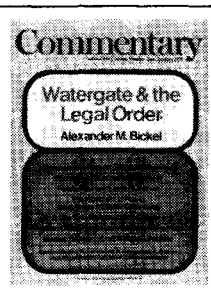

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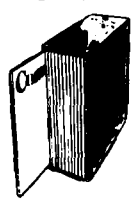

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must have had a weightier significance in Miss Hardwick's mind than she is able to give it on paper: namely, that to be taken seriously as a character in fiction, the woman who is seduced and betrayed must have superior moral qualities. She must be pure and innocent, honorable and independent, and have "the capacity for high or lowly suffering, for violent feeling absorbed, finally tranquilized, for the radiance of humility, for silence, secrecy, impressive acceptance. . . . Her fall or her fate can only be truly serious if a natural or circumstantial refinement exists." Of the women Miss Hardwick discusses, Hester, Maslova, Clarissa, and Tess are genuinely heroic because they possess these qualities. The others do not.

It is difficult to say exactly what Miss Hardwick intended to do with this insight. One can scarcely imagine that she would go to such lengths merely to restate in relation to women an aesthetic principle as ancient as Aristotle's *Poetics*. At moments it almost seems she is trying to suggest that male authors have conspired to make their women characters noble, humble, and enduring so that they will appear to be passive, even willing victims of the fate imposed upon them by ruthless men. If that is in fact the correct interpretation, then why does Miss Hardwick herself find these women admirable? One would suppose she would prefer them to be rebellious and vengeful, resisting to the death the efforts of men to manipulate them in this deceitful way. But once again she fails to clarify her position. She cites cases; she describes and passes on.

There can be no doubt, however, that the great theme of the seduction and betrayal novel is the often tragic disparity between the high personal worth of individual women characters and the low valuation which society places upon them, between their heroism and the unheroic status to which they are conventionally assigned. If, as Miss Hardwick suggests, we have now evolved into a period of cultural history in which innocence in women is no longer prized and we have ceased to respect superior moral qualities, then clearly the theme of seduction and betrayal has become obsolete. This may represent a crucial further stage in the liberation of women from male sexual and moral tyranny, but like so many developments in contemporary life, it is another humanitarian gain at the expense of literature.

A FINAL question must be raised about the principle governing the selection of these particular essays for the collection. It is of course common practice and perfectly permissible for a critic to bring together essays on whatever subjects he may have been invited by editors to write. But Miss Hardwick nowhere suggests that she intended the book to be simply a gathering of occasional pieces. The contents all relate to, and appear to be meant to develop, the theme indicated by the title and subtitle, and if that is their purpose, it is difficult to understand the rationale behind the inclusion of certain studies and the omission of certain others. If the Brontë sisters are considered germane to the discussion, why are not George Eliot and Jane Austen? Ibsen's women are given extensive treatment as are the heroines of the novels discussed in the closing chapter. Yet Anna Karenina and Emma Bovary are mentioned only in passing, while Moll Flanders, Isabel Archer, and Sister Carrie—to name only the most obvious among a great many possible candidates—are not mentioned at all. The subjects seem, in short, to have been chosen arbitrarily or according to some plan whose secret Miss Hardwick does not divulge. Other selections might well have served more persuasively as demonstrations of her thesis. But then in the body of her discussion Miss Hardwick reveals considerable uncertainty as to just what her thesis is, and she is unable to define and sustain a consistent attitude toward the evidence brought forward in her individual studies. It is for these reasons that, with due allowance for its many admirable features, her book seems an unsatisfactory performance, one that is often illuminating but that is finally vitiated by the obscurity or the confusion underlying her conception of her subject.

71 Days

ALIVE: THE STORY OF THE ANDES SURVIVORS. By PIERS PAUL READ. *Lippincott. 352 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM J. BENNETT

THERE are many opportunities for instruction about the psychology of survival in this story of sixteen Uruguayan young men who lived for 71 days on the frozen slopes of the Andes following the crash of their plane bound for Chile for a rugby match. Unfortunately, too many of these opportunities are sacrificed to overemphasis on the issue that has caused all the fanfare—the fact that the survivors fed from the bodies of their dead companions as a means of survival. Although recourse to this extreme measure is undeniably interesting and newsworthy, and it haunts the book as it haunts the reader's imagination, there is more to the story than anthropophagy. To be done with it, then, it should be acknowledged that there is no interesting moral problem about the violation of this taboo in these circumstances, and these religious Roman Catholic boys did not spend much time debating the merits of their decision. Although many of the boys were reluctant to eat from the bodies of the dead passengers, no one opposed the measure on principle and eventually all participated. This is not shocking, and what would be shocking, what in fact has happened in similar situations, is not present: there is no murder of the weak by the strong and no drawing of straws to see who will commit suicide to provide a source of food for the others. For the boys it is primarily a matter of mutual exhortation to overcome their strong revulsion against eating human flesh. Upon the return of the survivors, the priests who hear their confessions insist they have done nothing wrong, official Rome does not object, and even the parents of the dead understand what necessity required.

WILLIAM J. BENNETT, *a new contributor, teaches law and philosophy at Boston University.*

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Read seems more interested in the cannibalism issue than in bringing out the significant fact that the boys who survived (there was one man of thirty-five, the others were all between eighteen and twenty-six) had some important advantages in this desperate situation. For one, many knew each other as teammates or as close friends and supporters of the rugby team and thus were able to draw upon a shared history of cooperation and teamwork. Immediately following the crash the team captain becomes the leader of the survivors. In organizing an expeditionary force to search for a way down from the mountain, these athletes decide a practice run should be made to determine the physical fitness of the members of the force. Even though the group is short on supplies and energy, three boys are sent on a practice climb up a mountain. Costly as this is, it is worth the effort. One of the expeditionaries is unable to take the difficult conditions and is justly dropped from the expeditionary team. In the first days there is another advantage for the boys. They find solace from a lone woman survivor, Liliana Methol, a thirty-five-year-old mother of four, traveling with her husband. She comforts the boys in the evenings when she gathers them around her and tells them to tell stories about themselves. For the boys she becomes mother and *novia*; she keeps up their spirits in the most trying first few days. Only the death of the team captain by the same avalanche that takes her life and the lives of seven others is felt as deeply by the boys. This sense of devastation experienced by the boys is instructive; it contrasts sharply with current proclamations that woman's traditional role, the role that Liliana Methol played on the mountain, is demeaning, small, inconsequential.

Read provides a vivid picture of how time is spent on the mountain. Following the team captain's death the different groups—cooks, cleaners, expeditionaries, convalescents—negotiate their different and conflicting needs in a kind of checks-and-balances polity. The inevitable tensions arise, but on the whole there is a remarkably strong sense of teamwork and cooperation; there is good humor and even several practical jokes, and all this after the boys believe the search for them has been abandoned. Survival appears less sensational in this true story than in many fictional accounts. Thaumaturgy is also missing from the story. On the long nights on the cold mountain (the temperature would drop to forty degrees below zero) there are no deep philosophical discussions of death; because death is so close there is no need to speak of it. But there is talk of God, and all are confident He is watching over them. Theological debate is absent for, as Read points out, the boys were trained by the Christian Brothers, not the Jesuits. Before going to sleep the boys say the rosary together and on the expeditions the travelers pray as they climb, one word of the Lord's Prayer for every step. As is to be expected, thoughts of food occupy the boys' minds. They imagine the finest meals they will eat if rescued and exchange tales of the best dishes they can remember. Talk of home is too painful. There is little talk or thought of sex. Physically weak and deeply religious, these Roman Catholic boys, in Read's words, feel they "have too great a need of God to offend Him."

IN WRITING about the ill-fated Donner expedition across the United States in 1846 (here there was cannibalism following the murder of the victim) Bernard De Voto said: "Why, when death must be faced, do some personalities disintegrate whereas others abide by the qualities of resolution, fortitude, and courage which have persuaded the human race that it has dignity?" Neither Read, the storyteller, nor the story itself answers this pertinent question, but in the narrative there is ample material for carrying on the inquiry. One man, Parrado, known before the crash mainly as the sidekick of one of the handsome team stars, Abal, who dies in the crash, becomes in this desolate place a leader and a source of fortitude and courage for the others. The boys come to revere him.

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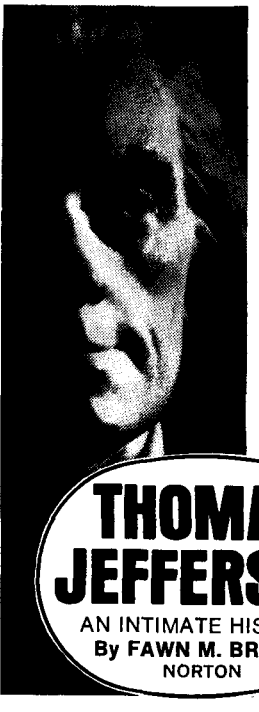

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THOMAS JEFFERSON
AN INTIMATE HISTORY
By FAWN M. BRODIE
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Jacques Lipchitz was the last survivor of the grand avant-garde of modern art, the last link with the heroic cubist period of the School of Paris. A friend of Picasso, Braque, Modigliani, and Le Corbusier, his death in May of this year at the age of 82 brought to a close the era in which they effectively revised the twentieth-century image.

Yet if Jacques Lipchitz was one of the first to apply the principles of cubist form to sculpture—and if, as he said of himself, he was "always a cubist"—it is in another sense that he finally commanded international attention. Cubism had always been an art of heroic form rather than of heroic themes. Lipchitz, turning his attention to the grand subjects of mythology and the Bible, forged a style that could accommodate such material. In some ways he ceased to be a modern artist. Working within an emotional climate that recalled the great efforts of Michelangelo and Rodin, he created monumental works that transcended our own time. In so doing he set aside his youthful experiments in favor of an art that would be capable of sustaining his own mature passion and eloquence.

The central figure of Jacques Lipchitz' mythology was Prometheus—who stole fire from the gods and brought it to mankind. Zeus punished Prometheus by chaining him to Mt. Caucasus, where a vulture fed upon his liver until Heracles—with the consent of Zeus—interceded and set him free. For Lipchitz, Prometheus symbolized the triumph of light over darkness, of education over ignorance, of the effective struggle for liberation in the face of arbitrary punishment and hardship. His interest in the figure apparently traces to 1931; but, with the Hitlerian threat of 1933, Prometheus took on new significance for him. By 1936, the Prometheus he created for the Paris World's Fair was not only chainless but had triumphed over the vulture.

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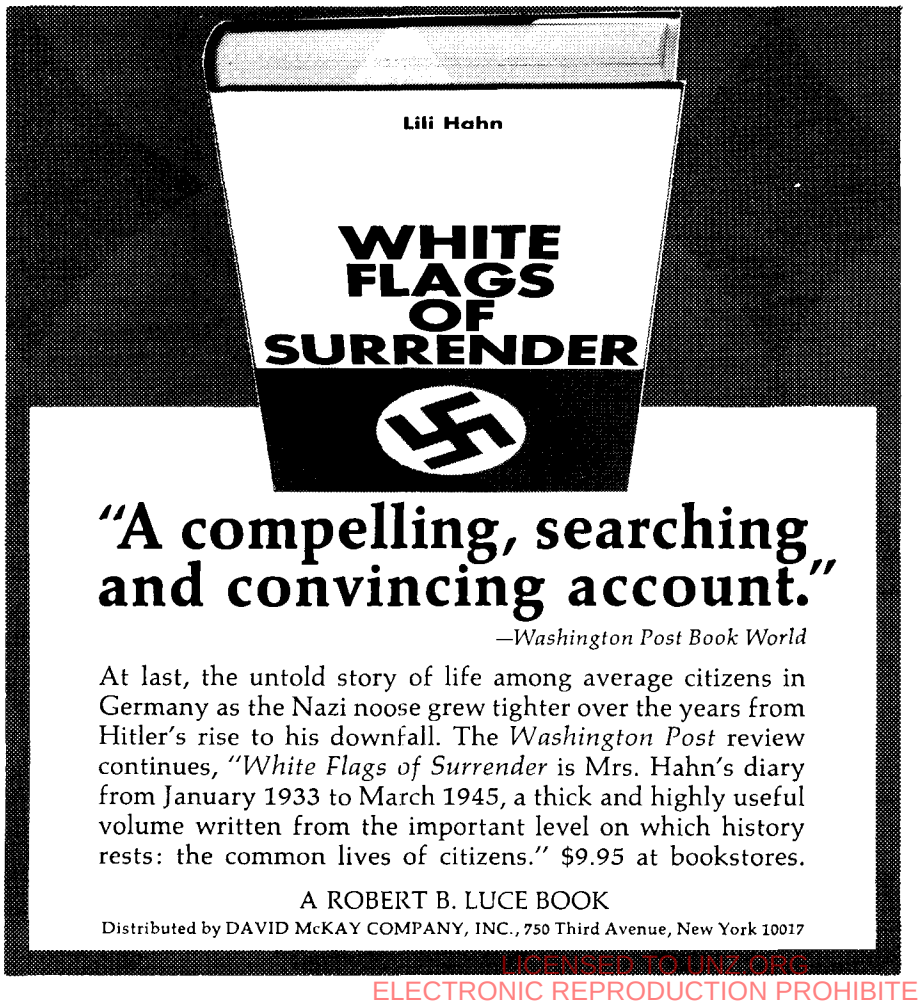
He leads the expeditions, and on the final successful expedition he carries his companion's pack up the steep mountainside, refuses to leave him lying in the snow, and gives up his share of food to him, believing him weaker. In the epilogue, Read follows Parrado upon his return home. Trying to live his new role of hero in the rich night life of Buenos Aires doesn't work. He poses for a picture with racing stars Emerson Fittipaldi and Jackie Stewart, judges a beauty contest, but soon flees the photographers and returns home to his job as a nuts-and-bolts salesman and his former friendly anonymity. Another character, the lawyer Pedro Delgado, whose professional eloquence is an initial asset in cheering the spirit of the survivors in the hours immediately following the crash, becomes the most disliked by the group of survivors. He is the least trustworthy; he takes more than his share of food and is regarded as a hoarder by the others. But unliked and unpopular in the desolation of the Andes, he becomes, to the subsequent displeasure of the boys, the sought-after spokesman of the group and darling of the press upon his return.

In the background, back in "civilization," a distressing plan is pursued. While the boys are struggling for survival these 71 days, their friends and parents do not give up hope despite discouragement from official reports. Motivated by strong religious faith, the parents make a terrible error in judgment that binds them all. Neglecting the facts that point to a search in the site of the actual crash, they expend their efforts in an area "divined" in the visions of the internationally known medium, Sidney Croiset, Jr. The effort expended in following his advice proves costly. One boy who survived in the fuselage for two weeks after the crash might have been saved had Croiset's advice been ignored. When his vision turns up nothing, Croiset then expresses his opinion that the survivors are dead. Fortunately, he is not listened to and the search efforts continue. Rescue finally comes as Parrado and his companion stumble off the mountain onto foothills where they are spotted by a mountain peasant.

DESPITE occasional disconcerting repetition (of unimportant details as well as of the cannibalism issue), the story of the Andes survivors is undeniably fascinating and Read tells it well. He is appropriately sympathetic to the boys and inappropriately forgiving toward Croiset who he argues did have *some* visions that corresponded with real events. His sympathy and understanding of the boys peak when they are set upon by an army of "journalists" seeking pictures and grisly particulars about the extreme measures taken to insure physical survival. But the most important lesson of the book concerns the boys' mental sustenance. It is clear that the boys are kept from mental desperation and despair by the strength of their inner resources. Deeply religious and deeply devoted to their families, they are able to live through an incredibly cruel and vicious assault on their stability and sanity largely because of the spiritual resilience that has been provided for them. Read's book is important, then, not only for what it teaches about the boys but for what it says, indirectly, about the institutions that nurtured these boys: the Church in whose faith they were raised, the families they refused to give up hope of seeing, and their teachers. These are the uncelebrated agents of rescue and heroes of the story. It is important to see that on the cold mountain the boys, although physically isolated, are not alone.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Jewish Emancipation

MOSES MENDELSSOHN: A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY. By ALEXANDER ALTMANN. *University of Alabama Press. 900 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by JACOB KATZ

THE name of Moses Mendelssohn—philosopher, man of letters, "Father of Jewish Emanici-

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pation"—is undoubtedly familiar to anyone who has even a cursory acquaintance with the highlights of Jewish history. The career of this 18th-century intellectual, a practicing Jew who nevertheless participated actively in the secular culture of his day, is rightly taken as marking the Jewish entry into modern European society. The fact that Mendelssohn himself played so central a role in, and had such a lasting effect on, the culture of his period has insured that he remain the object of extensive scholarly attention; a recent compilation of Mendelssohniana, for instance, fills a thick volume.* But among the voluminous articles, monographs, and book-length studies, there is only one full-scale biography, that of Meyer Kayserling, written over a hundred years ago, the inadequacies of which have long been felt. Alexander Altmann's monumental new biography not only supersedes the Kayserling study but should also serve as a turning point in the historical reevaluation of Mendelssohn's role in the process of Jewish emancipation.

A comprehensive biography of Mendelssohn requires an author expert in a number of different fields. He must be cognizant of the history of the traditional German-Jewish community from which Mendelssohn derived, a master of Jewish learning, the basic stratum in Mendelssohn's intellectual life, and at home with the intricacies of 18th-century Enlightenment, the philosophical movement of which Mendelssohn was a leading exponent. In addition, he must have an understanding of the social and political theories—and the reality—of the period, coupled with the psychological acumen necessary for dealing with the mental agonies to which Mendelssohn was prone. The happy combination of all these qualities in Professor Altmann makes his work a major achievement of scholarship.

The bulk of *Moses Mendelssohn* can be read and enjoyed by anyone interested in history. It should, however, be noted that a number of chapters seem addressed more to Professor Altmann's colleagues in the scholarly community than to the general reader. His approach may be seen in the treatment he accords to Mendelssohn's philosophical thought. Mendelssohn was a rationalist of the Leibniz school, and it was as such that whatever formal contribution he made to metaphysics must be understood. Yet the basic assumptions of the rationalist school were undermined during Mendelssohn's own lifetime by Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason,* and the substance of Mendelssohn's contribution thus lost its validity almost as soon as it saw the light of day. This fact sets up a terminological and conceptual barrier for the modern reader who, unless he is a specialist, is ill-equipped to grapple with the matter. Professor Altmann might have eased the reader's task here by paraphrasing the thought of the pertinent 18th-century philosophers instead of analyzing their arguments, as he does, in their original form of conception, but evidently he felt that to have done so would have meant writing a different kind of book.

This raises another issue of procedure that every biographer and historian must confront: whether to wrest his subject out of its historical setting and place it in a contemporary context, or to attempt a re-creation of the time and place under consideration. Professor Altmann has taken the second approach; the hero of his biography is not a Mendelssohn-for-moderns but a figure firmly set in his own landscape, the Germany of the second half of the 18th century. The issues peculiar to the period, which so agitated Mendelssohn and his fellow-thinkers, are expertly and thoroughly aired, and if along the way the reader discerns a contemporary resonance it will be the result not of any nudging on the part of the author but of his own reflections.

The historical importance of Mendelssohn is strikingly borne out by the esteem in which he was held by the leading thinkers of his day. There was scarcely an intellectual of any standing in the German-speaking countries of 18th-century Europe, including Austria and Switzerland, with whom he was not in contact, either personally or by

* *Moses Mendelssohn Bibliographie,* by H.M.Z. Meyer (Berlin, 1965).

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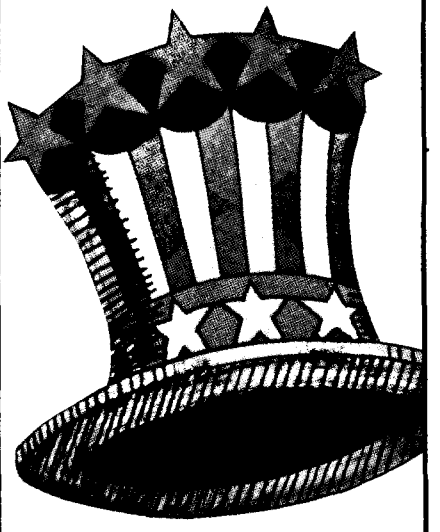

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correspondence; this group included members of the aristocracy and even incumbent statesmen. He enjoyed a warm friendship with the dramatist Ephraim Gotthold Lessing, conducted a literary association with the author Christoph Friedrich Nicolai, and cooperated with Christian Wilhelm Dohm in the cause of Jewish social and political advancement. That he was a figure of consequence is underscored by the fact that he was even the object of a public appeal—by Johann Caspar Lavater, in 1769—calling upon him to convert to Christianity.

That this career should have befallen a member of a community that was barely tolerated by the outside world and that, to all intents and purposes, still lived a ghetto existence, appeared, especially to Mendelssohn's Jewish contemporaries, nothing short of a miracle. Mendelssohn became an exemplar, a symbol, to his own and to future generations, and his achievement a model for emulation. He was, in Professor Altmann's phrase, the "spokesman of his people," serving his fellow-Jews in the traditional capacity of *shtadlan,* intervening on their behalf when necessary with persons of influence. Toward the end of his life he also turned to political reform, working to reshape the relationship between religion and state in a way that would accommodate the inclusion of non-Christians in a secular polity. At the same time, anticipating that changes in the political and social life of the Jews were not far in the offing, he urged them to prepare for the consequences of entry into the mainstream by relinquishing the compulsory religious conformism that characterized their communal life.

MENDELSSOHN has been celebrated by generations of Jews as a modern Moses, pointing the way out of the ghetto toward the promised land of emancipation. Others, however, have decried him as the prophet of unbridled assimilation. Professor Altmann for his part declines to chart the vacillating historical estimates of Mendelssohn-the-symbol, yet simply by tracing without bias the often problematic relations between Mendelssohn and his intellectual contemporaries, he has provided us with a more balanced view of Mendelssohn's historical role as well. For Mendelssohn's admittance into the 18th-century republic of scholars—the recurrent motif in any consideration of his significance—was indeed a momentous event. It indicated to Jews not only a possible way out of their ghetto isolation but also foreshadowed the price they might be expected to pay, in terms of social ambiguity and psychological burdens, for inclusion in the general society.

The reservations that accompanied Mendelssohn's acceptance by his Gentile peers became evident, above all, in the appeals for his conversion to Christianity. Not all the intellectuals with whom Mendelssohn had dealings, it seemed, could in the end entertain the notion of a Jew's making a creative contribution, as a Jew, to the general culture. This was brought home most forcefully by the Lavater episode, mentioned above, which caused Mendelssohn great mental distress and contributed to his already nervous disposition. The emotional depression to which Mendelssohn was susceptible reached a state of crisis in the wake of what was perhaps his deepest disappointment: following the death of Lessing, a mutual friend by the name of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, himself a philosopher of a religious bent, published a report of a conversation in which Lessing had purportedly confessed that at heart he was neither a Christian nor a deist, but a "Spinozist." Mendelssohn, who considered Lessing his closest friend, was deeply shaken by this intelligence from beyond the grave —some contemporaries thought that the shock hastened his death shortly thereafter.

This climactic chapter of Mendelssohn's life is a fascinating episode of intellectual history, fascinatingly told by Professor Altmann. For Mendelssohn, Lessing's "defection" marked the beginning of the end. The philosophy of the Enlightenment, which had shaped his entire thinking and outlook, was now coming under severe attack, and from two separate quarters—the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant and the neo-mysticism and neo-Christianity represented by someone like Jacobi and in a lesser way by Johann Georg Hamann and Johann von Herder. As this latter group became increasingly critical of Mendelssohn's philosophy, it also turned against the man himself. There now crept into philosophical discourse, at least in private correspondence, expressions that, as Professor Altmann observes, bespoke a distinct anti-Semitism—"Jewish tricks," "rabbinic lectures," and the like. So long as Mendelssohn stood at the height of his fame, his Jewishness was overlooked. Once a shadow fell on the philosophical school he represented, its entire ideology was seen as contaminated by egregious qualities peculiar to Jews.

If there is a moral to all this, it is the precariousness of Jewish achievement in a non-Jewish world. Thanks to Professor Altmann, the conventional image of Mendelssohn as the first modern Jew, triumphantly straddling two worlds and two cultures, has now to be replaced. His balancing act succeeded as long as it was a success, and no longer.

Growth vs. No-Growth

AN INQUIRY INTO THE HUMAN PROSPECT. By ROBERT L. HEILBRONER. *W. W. Norton. 150 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by RUDOLF KLEIN

ONLY a decade or so ago it was still fashionable to look at the competition between the United States and Russia, between a capitalist society based on a market economy and a planned society controlling the means of production and distribution, as a race between two rival economic systems. Victory would go to the nation which succeeded in exploiting technology to produce the highest growth rate; economic efficiency was taken to be the touchstone of performance by the two competing social systems. Now, however, it looks as though this particular

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debate will have to be turned inside out. If the world's capacity for growth is indeed finite, if there is going to be a choice between ecological disaster and acceptance of the stationary state, then a rather different test ought to be applied to social systems. The question then arises as to what sort of society can best cope with the consequences of no-growth.

The interest of Professor Heilbroner's book lies in the fact that he addresses himself to precisely this question. Although he shares some of the assumptions of the advocates of no-growth about the inevitability of catastrophe if the world continues on its present course—without falling into the trap of foreshortening time and pretending that one foot is already over the abyss—he does not share the curious innocence of those who persuade themselves that the stationary state is also the problemless state. On the contrary, he is gloomily insistent—as he well might be—that no-growth would test the adaptive capacities of mankind in an unprecedented way: that what is often seen as a problem of economic management (turning off the tap of growth, as it were) is in reality a problem of social management with profound implications for the political system of every nation in the global community.

No-growth, as Professor Heilbroner recognizes, would transform both domestic and national politics. Domestically, the traditional issue of income distribution —of who gets what—would acquire new edge; no longer would economic growth act as an emollient of social conflict. Internationally, competition for what would be a fixed amount of wealth might well turn into a cutthroat struggle between the poor countries (perhaps equipped with nuclear weaponry) and the rich nations. At best there would be continued tension, erupting occasionally into local conflicts; at worst, there would be nuclear catastrophe.

Given this prospect, Professor Heilbroner sees little hope for representative democratic systems based on a capitalist economy. Since these have failed "to create atmospheres of social harmony" even in conditions of growth, he is pessimistic about the capacity to cope with such problems as an acceptable distribution of a fixed amount of income. Besieged internally and externally, they would become increasingly authoritarian. But Professor Heilbroner's pessimism is all-embracing. He is equally skeptical about the adaptive capacity of planned "socialist" societies like Russia. For, as he sees it, the challenge of no-growth is to industrial society as such, irrespective of whether industry is privately or publicly owned. It is precisely because the American and Russian systems (using these as shorthand for two opposing models of government) both compete in the same terms, because they depend on industrial growth as their justification, that they are equally vulnerable in the long term.

There is only one type of society which, in Professor Heilbroner's view, seems suited to conditions of no-growth: the kind of society epitomized by Mao's China. The reason for this is not, as I understand the argument, because China is a socialist society but because it responds to certain basic human drives. In particular, it meets the need for parental figures —like chairman Mao—and for identification with the tribe or nation. In short, no-growth would mean a return to the political womb (the metaphor is deliberate, since Professor Heilbroner argues that both the desire for authoritarian leadership and for identification with a wider community reflects childhood experience).

It is possible to argue with some aspects of this analysis. For example, even China is a growth society. Income per head has risen significantly over the past twenty years. What is more, there are considerable inequalities in the distribution of income: the most skilled technician may get up to seven times the income of the least skilled worker. So China can hardly be held up as a model of the successful stationary state.

Still, there is little consolation to be drawn from making that point since China could well be the model of the *un*successful stationary state. In other words, Professor Heilbroner may well be right that

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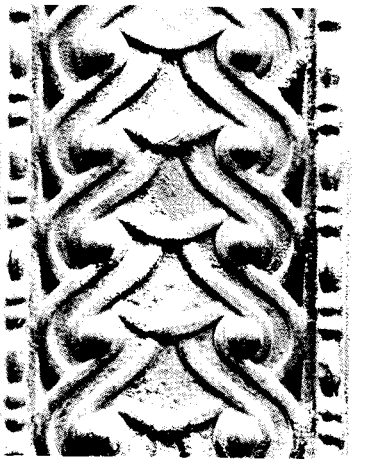

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Chinese society shows the price, in social and political terms, that may have to be paid for the achievement of no-growth. The emphasis on communal, at the expense of individual, values, the stress on social control as against personal achievement, could well be the hallmark of the stationary state.

It is an exceedingly depressing prospect (those who like the cozy sound of phrases like "communal values" might like to remind themselves that the other side of this particular coin tends to be the repression of dissent; togetherness can shade off all too easily into intolerance). And it is meant as such. For Professor Heilbroner takes no joy in his vision; like myself, he finds it as repugnant as it is persuasive. It would mean, as he points out remorselessly since he is something of an intellectual self-flagellant, the surrender of "political, social, and intellectual freedom" in favor of tradition, ritual, and the acceptance of "communally organized and ordained roles."

To accept the diagnosis is not, however, to accept also that the disease must take its inevitable, predestined course, as Professor Heilbroner is inclined to do. For as he himself points out—with more realism than is usually found among the prophets of doomsday—the timetable of the progress toward ecological disaster must be measured in terms not of the next few years or decades but of the coming century or more. Measured against the span of mankind's history, this is admittedly no more than a pinpoint on the scroll of global chronology. But it is quite a considerable period when one considers that the ravenous technology which threatens to precipitate the crisis is itself the product largely of the past century. It is certainly long enough for unexpected, because at this stage unpredictable, developments to prove the doomsday prophets wrong—a possibility which Professor Heilbroner does not appear to take seriously.

From this I would argue—against Professor Heilbroner—that the most immediate danger may lie in overreacting to what is still a problematic danger: in attempting to avert too quickly and too precipitately what is a distant and speculative doomsday. Given a sudden clamp-down on the economic brakes, it is only too likely that the passengers would go through the political windshield—that it would require an authoritarian regime to compel acquiescence. Given an attitude of careful skepticism, it might be possible not only to accommodate to change less catastrophically but also to change direction if present-day assumptions about the future turn out to be misleading.

In other words, I think a social-learning model can be opposed to Professor Heilbroner's social-revolution model. This would imply a process of gradual adaptation, allowing for trial and error and the possibility that the ecological pessimists may be proved wrong by events. As Professor Heilbroner himself mentions, without pursuing the logic of his own argument, there is already a trend toward a service-based, as distinct from an industry-based, society—Daniel Bell's post-industrial society. Although the growth of this kind of economy still shows up in the conventional figures of Gross National Product, it does not make the same demands on environmental resources: a warning about the complexity of the whole concept of no-growth. Societies are still in process, and simply extrapolating from past experience can be extremely misleading. Freudian determinism—by which I mean the extrapolation from childhood experience to political organization made by Professor Heilbroner—would seem to be just as chancy as ecological determinism.

A cautious, incremental approach carries the risk that change and adaptation may be too slow to meet the deadlines laid down by the doomsday prophets. The risk is certainly there, though the spurious precision of some of the deadlines that have been hawked around ought to be a warning against treating them too seriously. But the value of Professor Heilbroner's book lies in its stress on the social and political risks inherent in a no-growth strategy. The situation facing mankind—the human prospect of the title—is therefore not one which allows a simple choice because one danger so dominates all others that there is no option but to plunge in at the deep end without worrying whether there is a life-belt around. Rather it requires a careful mix of policies—a sort of global hedging of bets—which balances one set of risks against another.

This may be an unacceptable conclusion for those who like the reassurance of simple slogans like no-growth and who dislike the prospect of uncertainty. But it is a very comforting one for those who like myself are persuaded that Professor Heilbroner's warnings about the possible consequences of the stationary state are only too likely to prove right if this particular objective is pursued all-out. He is the most useful sort of prophet: the prophet who may be proved wrong precisely because he is persuasive enough to jolt his audience into thinking again about their basic assumptions. If the social and political price of no-growth is indeed as high and certain as he maintains, then it would seem that the speculative ecological risks of a policy of continued growth might well be preferable.

Education & Social Change

THE GREAT SCHOOL WARS. By DIANE RAVITCH. *Basic Books. 449 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by ELLIOTT ABRAMS

SINCE 1805, when New York's leading families established the Free School Society, the city's schools have played a social, as well as an educational, role. With the arrival of waves of immigrants from abroad and more recently from other parts of America, greater and greater emphasis came to be placed on the social role, until the schools were seen as the key to the solution of all the city's social problems—including the most intractable, racism. By the 1960's, as Diane Ravitch writes, large numbers of people shared "an al-

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most mystical belief in the power of the public school to change society and to save individuals." The schools' failure, in the case of blacks, to meet this standard—specifically, their failure to graduate most of their black students into successful middle-class lives—caused the battles now known collectively as the New York City teachers' strike of 1968.

Why should the schools have failed with black students when they succeeded with other groups in the past? It is Mrs. Ravitch's central contention here that the premise of this question is simply wrong: the failure, she argues, has not been on the part of the schools, but rather on the part of those who do not understand the limited role schools have played, and can realistically be expected to play, in reforming society.

Mrs. Ravitch is careful to separate two very different tasks historically assigned to the schools—Americanization and achievement of social mobility. In the 19th century, her narrative demonstrates, schools were an important, though by no means the sole, factor in facilitating the first process, but compiled an undistinguished record as to the second. By the early 20th century, however, even Americanization had become too much for the schools, as under the strains of increased immigration the public school was transposed into a "vast, underfinanced, bureaucratic social-work agency, expected to take on single-handedly the responsibilities which had formerly been discharged by family, community, and employer."

Yet if the record speaks otherwise, the myth of the schools' success in Americanizing immigrants, or at least the children of immigrants, has been a potent one, and it has been accompanied by another belief even further removed from reality—the belief that the schools were the path which led immigrant groups from poverty to success, and in the space of a single generation. Two misconceptions are at work here: first, that immigrant groups met with quick success in their economic activities, and second, that the schools were responsible for whatever success they did achieve. As Mrs. Ravitch explains, the popular notion that the schools worked so well is simply wrong: large numbers of immigrant children were dismally unsuccessful in school.

> The ladder was there, "from the gutter to the university," and for those stalwart enough to ascend it, the schools were a boon and a path out of poverty. The majority of immigrant children, who did not get to a university or even, in the first generation, through high school, owed as much or more to the nation's rapidly developing economy and to their own personal, familial, and cultural resources, than to the school.

As melting pots, then, the schools had a moderate impact—traceable in part, no doubt, to the mere fact of attendance. But attendance itself was not an admission ticket to the middle class; for this, a combination of economic conditions, cultural traditions, and individual ambition was necessary.

It is only very recently that we have come to appreciate any of this. Studies by educational scholars, such as James Coleman and Christopher Jencks, have demonstrated how very much more important an influence the home is than the school, while careful analyses by historians such as Stephan Thernstrom have indicated that there was much less social mobility in the 19th century than we had been taught to believe. These "revisionist" views of educational policy and American social history are well understood by Mrs. Ravitch, and she is careful to place the schools in perspective: school organization and curricula, and the battles over them, reflect rather than produce social change. As she notes in the preface to *The Great School Wars*, "a history of the New York City public schools [has] to be a political history," and her book enables us to see why each battle over the schools occurred in the way that it did, when it did.

The Great School Wars begins its narrative with the fight over state aid to Catholic schools in the 1820's and 30's—a fight precipitated by the great wave of Irish immigration. The second "war," in

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the 1890's, and the third, roughly between 1910 and 1920, reflected the new, Southern European immigration, the fluctuating fortunes of the Tammany machine, and the theories and influence of upper-class reformers. The fourth school "war" was that of the 1950's and 1960's, in which race was a central issue and the new immigrants were from Puerto Rico or were blacks from the Southern states.

The division into four periods allows Mrs. Ravitch room to describe distinct events and personalities while at the same time emphasizing the recurrent nature of the problems faced by the schools. Her history is a long one, and some readers may feel overwhelmed by detail. Drawing conclusions without benefit of a careful exposition of the facts, however, would have been a much worse alternative, especially when the author is challenging conventional views on a variety of subjects. In any case, among the details are fascinating bits of social history and portraits of individuals who have at various times played crucial roles in the life of the schools. Mrs. Ravitch's clear and direct style is well suited to conveying a wealth of history and analysis, and anyone with a modicum of interest in the city or its schools will find her book easy and absorbing reading.

Just past the middle of *The Great School Wars* Mrs. Ravitch reaches the events leading up to the teachers' strike of 1968. By this time her perspective is already quite evident: the "failure" of the schools when it came to black students could have been predicted, since success had been defined as not only coping with, but solving, a wide range of social problems rooted in factors like racism, inadequate housing, high crime rates, and unemployment. Nevertheless, the "mystical belief in the power of public schools" continued to hold sway, and contributed the incentive to act; and since the schools, unlike the national economy, were locally controlled, the means for action were at hand. At first, in the 1950's and the early part of the 1960's, the goal of school reformers was integration—a battle that in retrospect seems to have been doomed from the outset. Integration meant the end of the neighborhood school and the busing of white children into the slums, with no enhancement in the quality of their education. As such, it would have been unpopular among whites even without the intrusion of racism; with racism in the mix, integration through long-range busing became politically impossible. Mrs. Ravitch adds, however, that integration was also increasingly difficult pragmatically. Each year, the racial balance in the city's public schools shifted further from white to non-white, and with each shift in the demographic balance the frail chances for large-scale integration were further diminished. Though school administrators understood this fully, they refused to acknowledge it, continuing instead to mouth full support for neighborhood schools *and* integration.

In the end, integration was bypassed as a goal, and "community control" became the standard behind which many powerful political forces rallied. Mrs. Ravitch's discussion of how and why this occurred focuses on the key question raised by community control: Who represents the community? During the teachers' strike of 1968, only two of the protagonists, Mayor Lindsay and United Federation of Teachers' President Albert Shanker, were duly elected representatives, wielding power because some "community" had chosen them. Mrs. Ravitch describes in detail how the Ocean Hill-Brownsville School Board and its chosen Superintendent, Rhody McCoy, schemed successfully to avoid a compromise and force a confrontation with the union. With what authority was the local board acting? Exceedingly little. It was chosen in a manner charitably described as unorthodox, by a small fraction of the area's residents, and it espoused a position supported, at the height of the crisis, by 29 per cent of its constituents.

As Mrs. Ravitch suggests, this very lack of legitimacy on the part of the black "leaders" destroyed all chances for compromise. Since their power (and celebrity) originated in the extreme position they took on the one issue of community control, it was not in their personal interest to help bring the crisis to an end. No settlement was reasonable to them for none could offer them a role as central as the one they were playing in the continuing confrontations.

The problem of legitimacy was not limited to the black community's self-appointed representatives. One might question as well the extent to which the views of the city's white residents were represented by the Ford Foundation, the Urban Coalition, or the New York Civil Liberties Union, all of which played active parts in the crisis, or for that matter by the Board of Education, an appointed body whose members' experience with the city's public-school system was negligible and whose ethnic composition appeared indistinguishable from that of the board of the Metropolitan Opera.

In the end, the only barrier between the extremists and control of the ghetto schools turned out to be Albert Shanker and the UFT. Shanker and the teachers, throughout the 1960's, fought for serious reforms and increased expenditures, and opposed the sort of "decentralization" which would turn the schools over to the new and highly vocal "community leaders." Ironically, though Shanker was accused of indifference or even hostility to the residents of the city's slum areas, he was almost alone in recognizing how great an effort was really needed, and how deceptive were the promises that "community control" would make a difference in the lives of the city's poor minorities.

PUBLIC EDUCATION is an area in which a knowledge of history is especially important. An understanding of the limited power the schools have to bring about social change might well have avoided New York's school wars of the 1960's. Mrs. Ravitch's valuable study reinforces the lesson that good schools can provide a pathway "from the gutter to the university" for the talented few, but can do little to affect the more important task of assuring that no Americans live in conditions that merit being called "the gutter."

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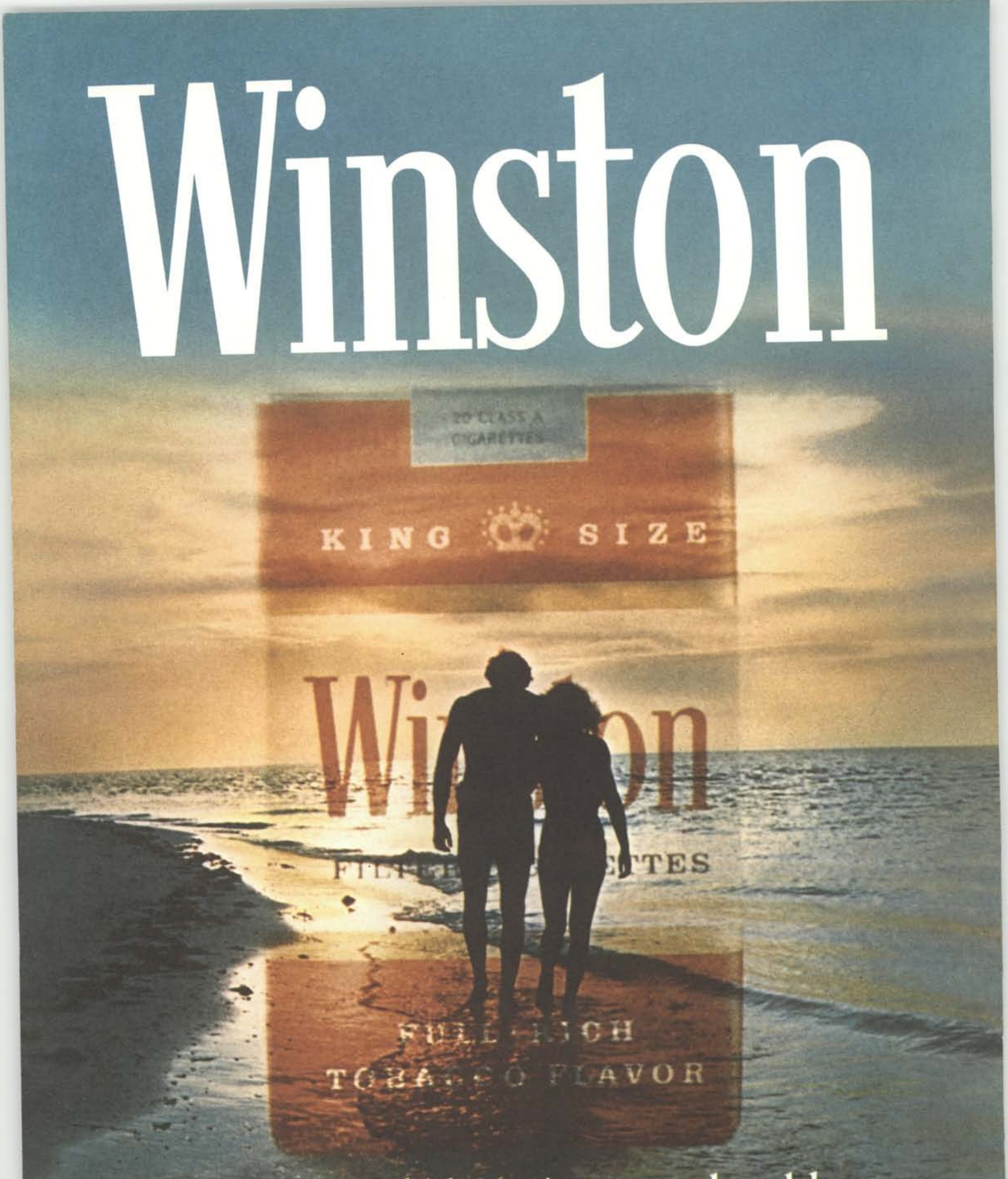

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